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THE
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Quarterly

AN ILLUSTRATED JOURNAL

OF

LITERATURE AND ART



Contents.

	PAGE
I.—Drawing. By F. J. SHIELDS, A.R.W.S. (<i>Frontispiece</i>)	
II.—A Lesson in Diversity. By FREDERICK J. SHIELDS	289
III.—A Quondam Librarian. By JOHN MORTIMER	291
IV.—Madame de Sévigné. By EDMUND MERCER	300
V.—A Day Off: Lancaster. By W. R. CREDLAND	318
VI.—Nicholas Ferrar. By the Rev. W. C. HALL ...	329
VII.—The Forget-me-not: Verses. By W. V. BURGESS	357
VIII.—Manchester under the Court Leet. By T. SWINDELLS	358
IX.—Congreve and his Comedies. By J. J. RICHARDSON	379
X.—Robert Bloomfield. By JOHN H. SWANN ...	390
XI.—The Magic Elixir: a Ballad. By THOMAS NEWBIGGING	402

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	PAGE
I.—Drawing. By F. J. SHIELDS, A.R.W.S. (<i>Frontispiece</i>)	
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FOUNDED 1862.

The objects of the MANCHESTER LITERARY CLUB are :—

1. To encourage the pursuit of Literature and Art; to promote research in the several departments of intellectual work; and to further the interests of Authors and Artists in Lancashire.
2. To publish from time to time works illustrating or elucidating the literature, art, and history of the county.
3. To provide a place of meeting where persons interested in the furtherance of these objects can associate together.

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1. The holding of weekly meetings, from October to April, for social intercourse, and for the hearing and discussion of papers.
2. The publication of such papers, at length or abridged, in a Magazine, entitled the *Manchester Quarterly*, as well as in an annual volume of Transactions; and of other work undertaken at the instance of the Club, including a projected series of volumes dealing with local literature.
3. The formation of a library consisting of (a) works by members, (b) books by local writers or relating to the locality, and (c) general works of reference.
4. The exhibition, as occasion offers, of pictures by artist members of the Club.

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The meetings are held at the Grand Hotel, Aytoun Street, every Monday evening during the Session. Each Session opens and closes with a *Conversazione*. There are also occasional Musical and Dramatic Evenings, and a Christmas Supper. During the vacation excursions are held, of which due notice is given.

W. R. CREDLAND, *Hon. Secretary.*

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"WE LIVE IF WE STAND FAST IN THE LORD."



A LESSON IN ADVERSITY.

By FREDERICK J. SHIELDS.

ON a late October day of last year, as I passed along the pergola, festooned with hop and briony, that leads to my studio, my gaze was rivetted by an object lesson that made a deep impress on my mind, when its need of such a lesson was very sore. So remarkable was it that I went in for paper and pencil to secure the memento which is the subject of this brief note.

Among the many sunflowers, stately, tall and strong of stem, their heads bowed with abounding wealth of seed, that bordered the walk, was a crippled one, the one portrayed, brave-hearted plant. By some fierce gale or untoward blow its stem had in its youth been nearly snapped asunder, its upper portion had fallen earthward, and its leaves, once elate with vigorous spring, now hung shrivelled like burnt rags. It would have seemed that all hope that it could ever attain the end of its being was fatally blighted. Not so! For though at the fracture of its stem the broken fibres were dried up, yet by a slender living junction it still drank sap from its root, and, as if animated by an invincible spirit within it, had turned its downcast stem up from the earth, renewed its heavenward ascent, shaken off despondency, and slowly, toilfully pursued its struggle to regain its native growth, till it had at last reached a point from whence it aspired

triumphantly, putting forth fresh green leaves, and, finally, its flaming coronal surmounting as a crowned victor all its hindrances and attaining unto the image of the glorious luminary whose name it fitly bears.

Mark that turning point when, at the lowest state, that turn resolved its fate. That once made the ascent began, and the new life became ever more and more masterful over its past adversity until the point whence it victoriously pressed sunward. By contrast with its more fortunate comrades, its flower was indeed small, but it had vindicated itself to be their brother, a perfect sunflower—the least, and yet the greatest, of that brilliant host.

I was weary, depressed, bowed down by the assaults of foes, crushed by the unfaithfulness of some who should have been my stoutest friends, and my work and life appeared broken.

This sunflower, as a brother in adversity, spoke courage and hope to my soul. It seemed as if it had endured its stern fight of affliction for my sake, as truly as the Lord once made the growth and withering of the gourd eloquent for Jonah's reproof.

It may have like ministry for some who read this note and see this picture of triumph over adversity.





A QUONDAM LIBRARIAN.

By JOHN MORTIMER.

FOR my acquaintance with the Quondam Librarian I am indebted to my old friend the Quietist, a lover of literature—in whose fair pastures he is the gentlest of browsers, without any ambition to become himself an author—a book hunter withal, he is ever on the look out for waifs and strays, the unconsidered trifles of ill-assorted bookstalls. Thereby does he enrich his bookshelves, usually at a very small outlay, with many volumes quaint, rare, or curious. My copy of “The Doctor,” by Southey, a bulky tome of near upon seven hundred pages, he obtained for a comparatively few pence, making of the purchase, when he knew that I desired it, a very willing transfer. Lately he submitted to me, as one of his acquisitions, a volume of much smaller dimensions than Southey’s, entitled “The Spirit of the Doctor,” the Doctor in this case being, as the title-page goes on to say, “the late Mr. James Watson, formerly librarian of the Portico, Manchester, and commonly called Doctor Watson.” It was published in 1820, soon after the Doctor’s death, and was “printed for the Editors, by George Cave.” One of the editors, apparently, was a certain Corporal Trim, a humourist of the Shandean

type, who has availed himself of a large portion of the volume to set forth what he calls "The Humors of Trim," prefixing thereto a dedicatory page of his own, which is a curiosity in its way, and runs thus: "To every body or any body, yet in truth, to nobody living before the Flood, but to all them now living, and to their each, and every of their wives, and sweethearts, respectively, and respectfully, and to all others whom it may concern, as also to the Reader, the following publication of 'Scraps, Raps and Rhapsodies,' hastily undertaken, imperfectly executed, and still more imperfectly published, is without the Hesitation, Let, Hindrance or Ceremony, most respectfully inscribed, by their ever dutiful, ever faithful, most hopeful, and very obsequious servant, Corporal Trim." With the Corporal, I have nothing further to do here, save to note that he appears to have been a Bohemian of the genial order, who lucklessly got himself incarcerated for debt in Lancaster Castle, wherefrom he wrote lengthy and humorous epistles describing his life there, to his friend the Doctor.

Prefixed to the volume is a portrait of the Doctor, which, from a pencil memorandum of a former owner, we learn was "taken at the age of thirty, and printed from stone at Ridgefield, August 1820." It shows us a head strongly outlined, a lengthened, heavy face, shock-haired above the forehead, with large eyes, assertive nose, a full-lipped mouth, suggestive of both humour and weakness, and with the chin of it resting upon a thickly-folded neckcloth. He was, we are told, a man of small stature, and was known, by his intimates, as "the little Doctor." The matter of the book, which is intended to convey to us his spirit, consists of a brief memoir, bearing the initials D.W.P. as those of the writer—which initials, a pencil note tells us, stood for D. W. Paynter,—anecdotes, bon mots of the Doctor, together with specimens of his poetical effusions.

In the reading of it the book makes us acquainted with a strange, erratic figure, not altogether unworthy of a literary resurrection. James Watson was born in Booth Street, Tib Lane, Manchester, in the year 1775. He was the son of a respectable apothecary who, coming here from Darwen, set up a medical dispensary in Hanging Ditch. The apothecary sent his son to be educated first to a Mrs. Penny—"a cankered penny," her pupil afterwards called her—in Half Street, near the Old Church, then to Mr. Byrom's academy in the neighbourhood of Deansgate, and eventually to the Manchester Grammar School. His school days ended, he was apprenticed to Mr. James Higginson, a fustian manufacturer of Peel Hall, near "Poor Dicks," in the township of Little Hulton. Here, we are told, he remained in unwilling bondage, for three years, gaining, along with his knowledge of the business, an early reputation for eccentricity and humour. To quote from the quaint record of his biographer, we read that "he retained his situation till the time of his father's demise; but no sooner was Mrs. Martha Watson reduced to a state of widowhood than she took her volatile son to herself; and having imbibed, from her late husband, a pretty clear knowledge of pharmacy, the *gallant* Yorick (possibly for prudential reasons) was immediately initiated, by her, in the mysteries of that art. It soon, however, became evident (too evident, alas! for the old lady's peace) that the *golden* chimes produced by a mortar and pestle, afforded less pleasure to the ear of her reckless *Tyro* than the *unprofitable* jingle of verse—for he not only began to scrape acquisition with the works of the best English poets (particularly with those of the immortal Shakespeare!), but also to invoke the Muse, on his own account, who occasionally condescended to oblige him with an irregular sonnet, a wild ballad or a humorous epigram."

The making up of physic, however, was no more to his taste than the manufacture of fustian, and as an apothecary he was a distinct failure. By the way it is on record that he had once been floored by his father for telling him, in conundrum fashion, that apothecaries were like snipes, because they had thick heads and long bills. He was a trouble to his mother, too, who couldn't keep him to his work. He would stroll out bareheaded in the early morning, and she would see no more of him until the late afternoon, when he would saunter back in the same hatless condition, and to the old lady's question "So sir! whither have you been rambling?" would reply: "Rambling, mother! How could I ramble without a hat! I've merely been in the neighbourhood!" The good mother little knew that he kept a reserve hat at a bookseller's in the market place. Says his biographer: "She had often occasion to reprove him for keeping late hours. The Doctor, to avoid the sin of uttering an absolute falsehood, hit upon the following notable device—chalking the numbers 10 and 11 on either side of the doorcase he always declared that he regularly *came in between* ten and eleven, let the hour be ever so untimely, and in this he could not be contradicted as his mother constantly retired to rest soon after nine." The poor mother had but a troublous time with her erratic son, but she lived to see him appointed the first librarian of the Portico. Meantime, he had gained a reputation in the town as a great wit, a lover of books, and a man of literary acquirements. He seems to have had a very retentive memory of the Porson kind, which stood him in good stead when an apt quotation was needed. This ready faculty did not forsake him even in his cups, a condition in which the poor Doctor was often to be found. Going home one night in a convivial condition, he fell into a heap of refuse, from which, for the edification of his friends, he apostro-

phized a street lamp "with the opening speech of Octavian in the play of 'The Mountaineers.'"

'Tis dawn!

Thou hot and rolling sun, I rise before thee;

For I have twice thy scorching flames within me,—

And am more restless!

He was a welcome companion at dinner tables, and in taverns, which helped to his ultimate undoing. He was a prolific punster, and had a quick and merry wit in the production of impromptus and epigrams. You find a good many of these scattered among his verse, which often takes the sonnet-form in his addresses to fair ladies, who were numerous, and to whom he always expresses himself in sentiments of unexceptionable purity. He had a strong predilection for the drama, and was himself an amateur actor whose ambition it was to play Richard III., after the manner of his friend G. F. Cooke, then a notable figure at the Theatre Royal, in Fountain Street. At that playhouse the Doctor was a well-known spectator and critic, who, for a time issued a weekly stage review under the title of "The Townsman," which found its way into the hands of half the town. He wrote laudatory verses for the actors he admired, and occasionally favoured them with a song or an address from the stage. He was a contributor to the newspapers of his time, and, by virtue of his wide reading, was engaged by Mr. Wm. Cowdroy, the proprietor of the *Manchester Gazette*, as a compiler of "The Gleaner: or entertainment for the Fireside," a periodical which had a large and ready sale.

There are a good many anecdotes told of the eccentricities and foibles of this quaint and picturesque Doctor, who seems, of a truth, to have been no man's enemy but his own. He used to go about with a crab stick, with a coffin-

nail driven into the head of it to remind him of death. His favourite drink was brandy, a glass of which he would call for as a "coffin-nail," and "he would frequently tell his friends how many coffin-nails he had driven or drank during the day." One day John Lamb, the landlord of the Garrick's Head, while the Doctor's back was turned, surreptitiously drank his glass of brandy and water. When the theft was detected, this impromptu was forthcoming:—

Thy name Lamb, change to Wolf or Bruin!
 To flout thee, 'tis but fair;
 That thou hast done a deed of ruin,
 My looks must needs declare!

A plague on thy insatiate maw!
 'Twould make a parson rail—
 That pincers-like, thy throat should draw
 My golden coffin-nail!

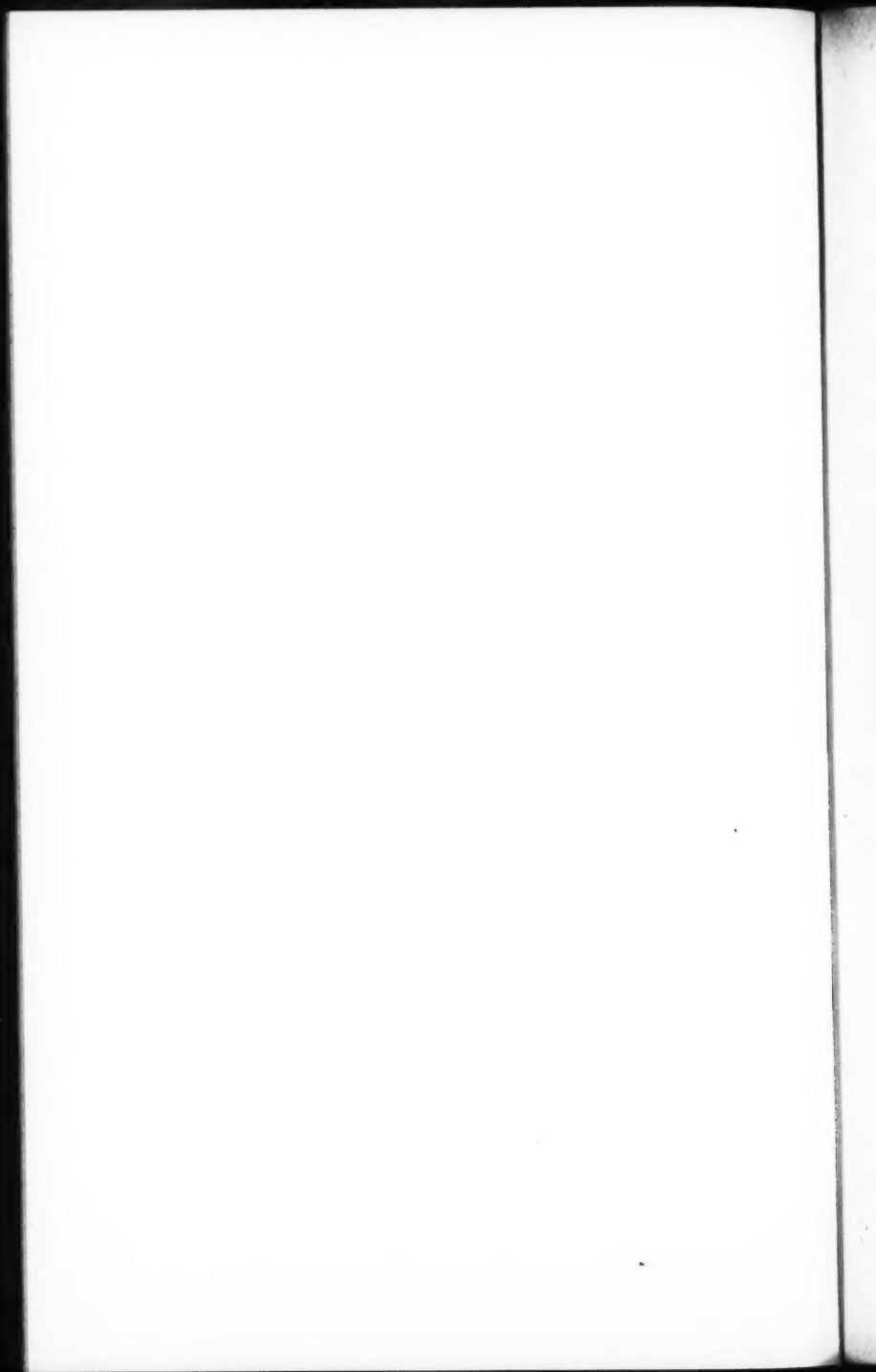
The Rev. Joshua Brookes, of "Old Church" fame, recognized in him a kindred humourist, and they would bandy words together. Once, however, the fun was not to the liking of Joshua, and he exclaimed: "Thou art a black-guard, Jemmy," to which the Doctor replied: "If I be not a blackguard, Joss, I am next to one."

Librarians one has heard of who have known little about the insides of the books which they had to conserve, but the Doctor was not of those, and so it happened, to quote the words of his biographer, that "when the Portico in Mosley Street (a structure which had long been wanted in this opulent and improving town) was completed, Mr. Watson, by a select committee of the proprietors, was nominated to the librarianship, an office which his ardent attachment to, and general knowledge of books, rendered doubly acceptable." Further we read, and this is all the





JAMES WATSON, AT THE AGE OF THIRTY.



knowledge we have of his doings there, that "For several years the Doctor conducted himself at the Portico with more regularity and decorum than might probably have been expected from him; and was greatly esteemed by the whole body of proprietors, to many of whose houses he received repeated invitations, of which he usually availed himself, and seldom omitted, on these occasions by his brilliant sallies of wit, 'to set the table in a roar.' However, his former whimsical habits returning upon him, he grew exceedingly remiss in discharging the duties of his office, absented himself from the Library first for many hours in the day, then for several days in the week, and afterwards for two or three weeks in the month, till ultimately, from a consciousness of error, he was ashamed to return at all—though he had been specially advised by a number of his friends, who possessed no inconsiderable influence, to face the committee at all hazards, and they would freely exert every nerve towards his re-instatement. But counsel and entreaty proving alike ineffectual, the post, as a natural consequence, was given to another."

Then this poor Doctor, having been kindly taken in hand by Mr. Henry Race, who kept a boarding school at Altrincham, became an usher there. "Here," we are told, he lived at perfect ease, was temperate, diligent and sedate," but alas! from this haven he was lured back, by some of his old companions, to Manchester, where he fell into his old ways, and remained so long away "that the same sense of shame which would not allow him to appear before his masters at the Portico, prevented his return to Altrincham, and thus the gay, the witty, the incautious Watson was again, and for ever, destitute of a home."

Henceforth the poor wanderer, who never seems to have lost his gaiety of spirit, experienced strange and sad vicissitude, so that, "to him, a narrow bench in the

meanest tavern, was a couch of down; and so familiar did this abject mode of resting become, that he has sometimes been known to refuse the offer of a comfortable bed, for a line of chairs and a good fire." In these destitute days he managed to make up scrap books of cuttings from newspapers, which he would dispose of to friendly purchasers. When town resources failed, the wandering jester, in search of hospitality, would visit his friends in the neighbouring villages. "His final ramble was to Didsbury, where on the morning of the 24th June, 1820, he was unhappily drowned in the river Mersey. His remains were not discovered till the 28th of the same month, on the evening of which day they were privately, yet with becoming decency, interred in the village churchyard."

I should not, perhaps, have been induced to write these words regarding the Quondam Librarian had he not, in one or two features of his life, touched one's imagination. Within sight of the Portico, looking down Mosley Street, is the church of St. Peter, and of this edifice in connection with our subject, in his destitute days, we read thus: "Often he was compelled, by hard necessity, to wander the cheerless and deserted streets . . . pinched with hunger and benumbed with cold. Often, in the darkest hour, has he tremblingly climbed over the palisades which invest the church of St. Peter, to obtain, beneath its inhospitable portico, a shelter from the wind and the rain. Here, with no companion but reflection, with no covering but his own apparel, with no other pillow than that which a cold step, or a column's base afforded, the miserable Yorick often lay—

"Till morning dawned upon the drowsy world."

To bring the Opium Eater into connection with our Quondam Librarian is to bring him into strange, though

not altogether alien company. Yet in the church of St. Peter they seem to come together. The church is associated with De Quincey, and was built for one of his early tutors, the Rev. Samuel Hall. In his "Confessions" De Quincey tells us that he was present at the consecration of it, and describes the opening ceremony, and, later, he was accustomed, on Sundays, to come to the services there, from Greenheys. The Portico was not built then, but, in after years, he used it, while visiting Manchester, and carried away with him the mistaken impression, gathered from the name, that its subscribers were Stoics or followers of Zeno, referring to them as "Gentlemen of the Porch." De Quincey, like the Doctor, was a Grammar-school boy, who made a memorable flight from his school, and entered upon a period of vagrancy, during which he knew what it was to sleep in the open-air on the hill-sides in Wales, and to wander forlorn, hungry and homeless, in the streets of London. In this wise, in a kind of companionship in suffering, do the two come together.

Whenever I have attended service at the church of St. Peter I have thought of the boy De Quincey as an auditor there, whose experiences of the devotional kind form an interesting feature of his "Confessions." In these later days a decree has gone forth that the church shall be demolished, but as long as it lasts, I shall never look across the railings that enclose it without thinking of the poor, miserable, and erstwhile librarian of the Portico climbing over them in the night to seek shelter in the porch from the wind and the rain.





MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ.

By EDMUND MERCER.

TO converse is to live, might well serve for a motto expressive of the principal feature of French society and literature during the second half of the seventeenth century. The previous era produced Montaigne, the first prose writer to free himself from academics and say what he thought in his own words; Rabelais, the pioneer of the art of saying nothing but meaning much; Brantôme, the premier gossip; Marguérite of Navarre, the daintiest of story-tellers; and after them a cavalcade of authors of "Mémoires" more or less mendacious, with Generalissimo Tallemant in the rear. The tendency of literature on the line thus drawn was to become more conversational; in ever-divergent contrast with the work of the purists, Malherbe, Balzac, the Solon of French prose, and the rest. These two types were most distinct in the reign of Louis XIV. On the side of academical uniformity, following the learned masterly technique of the writers last named, were Boileau and his French polish, "revise your work twenty times, and polish and re-polish incessantly;" Racine, the most perfect example of Boileau's advice; Flechier, less happy in prose; La Bruyère, with his nut-like style, hard to crack, crisp and sweet to the palate; La Rochefoucauld, the man of long

life and short phrases. Ranged in opposition we find besides those just enumerated such diverse writers as Regnier in satire, La Fontaine in verse, Molière in comedy, Fénelon and Bossuet in theology, St. Simon in Mémoires and Cyrano de Bergerac in everything. The swift growth of the lighter vein was most largely due to the Salon Rambouillet, first of its kind, a very Court of Literature. From the days of Henri the Great it gathered to its brain the best intelligences in France, intellectual and gossipy alike, the one studying mankind in the mass, the other in the individual. There is no great cry between philosophy and scandal; they are kin as laughter and pathos. From this source flowed a sparkling river of style, fickle, unconstrained, versatile, without tradition or method, conformable to all diversities of talent and every variety of genius, irrigating the arid deserts of scholasticism and producing a verdure that has made French literature the most picturesque in Europe. To be plain, the most prominent characteristics of the literature of France, as compared with other European literatures, were—and are—its wit, its intimacy, its air of conversation, its knowledge of the world of men and women; its keen, intelligent astuteness whether in courtesy or ridicule, its delicacy of feeling, its piquancy, grace and courtliness of diction. All these in varying degrees of excellence are to be found in the "Letters" of Madame de Sévigné, who, without effort and with no suspicion of it herself, made written conversation a new literary type, and a collection of miscellaneous letters a masterpiece unique in the whole realm of literature.

A reading of her numerous published letters, filling some three thousand pages of close print—a long but not wearying matter—would almost convince one that their writer had not known serious trouble. This is far from

true. Naturally brave and of an energetic temperament, her dominating intelligence saw the futility of complaint where redress lay in her own power or in mere patience.

"We often," she remarked, "dread misfortunes which lose the name through change of our thoughts and inclinations." So she faced her world with firm front, bringing all her energies to the task of minimising her trials and augmenting her joys. "Fortune is ever on the side of the big battalions," was a saying of hers; which she so well succeeded in proving that it was remarked—and wrongly—that she had more enjoyment and vivacity than sensibility. An infancy without parents; marriage without love; her husband, a deceitful, duel-killed *roué*; widowed in the fulness of her youth and beauty with the care of two young children; her son, barely reared, joining the army, filling her with fear for his safety; her daughter following a husband to the end of the realm; long separation filling her days with uneasiness; short reunions whose tenderness embittered the subsequent absences; fortune almost vanishing under the lavishness of son and carelessness of son-in-law; watchings; cares; apprehensions; illness; old age. Such was the life of Madame de Sévigné behind the scenes, hidden as far as might be from the sight, sympathy or otherwise of all but one or two. True, she had many compensations; but these were almost wholly due to her bravery and brightness.

The 5th of February was a noteworthy date in her calendar. On this day in the year 1626 she was born; on this day in 1651 her husband died; and on this day in 1671 began that lifelong separation from her daughter, a loss to her and a gain to literature. It was at the Place Royale in Paris that Marie, the wife of Celsus Benignus Rabutin, Chevalier and Baron de Chantal, gave birth to a daughter, who was baptised the next day at the Church of

St. Paul, and was known until her eighteenth year as Marie de Rabutin-Chantal. When she was one year old, her father, commanding a regiment of gentlemen volunteers, was killed by, it is said, the hand of Oliver Cromwell, in defending the Isle of Rhé against the attack of the English. For the next nine years her upbringing fell to the care of her mother and her mother's brother, Christopher de Coulanges, the "good" Abbé of Nôtre Dame de Livry, who, from 1636, was left alone, worthy custodian of the life and fortunes of his lovely, loving and loved niece. For some time she was a fellow-pupil under Ménage (who was a considerable figure in her life) with Julie d'Angennes, daughter of the Marquise de Rambouillet, and Marie-Madeleine Pioche de la Vergne, better known a few years later as Madame de la Fayette. Chapelain had also a great share in her acquirement of Latin, Spanish, Italian, and perhaps Greek, and though between the two she became a scholar she never degenerated into a blue-stocking. The doors of the Hôtel Rambouillet were doubtless opened to her by her friend Julie d'Angennes; but her satirical humour saved her from becoming one of those *précieuses* whom Molière was so soon to hold to the laughter of the nation. On the 1st of August, 1644, at eighteen, she married Henri, Marquis de Sévigné, an illustrious noble of Brittany, bringing him a dowry of one hundred thousand *écus*. The man was a selfish roué, with eyes for every woman but his wife, spending her dowry in debauchery of the most open kind; but she did not complain. The worst we find her saying is: "M. de Sévigné esteems but does not love me; on my side I love but do not esteem him." Ménage may have been her consoler. His reported remark is certainly original. "The greatest misfortune that could happen to M. de Sévigné was to marry you; for everyone remarks,

'What a scamp for such a woman!'" Tallemant de Réaux had also a characteristic little compliment for "our immortal epistolary," as he styled her: "Her husband had the bad taste to become amorous of Madame de Gondran. I liked his wife better." Her married life was a short one. On the 4th of February, 1651, Sévigné met the Chevalier d'Albret in a duel about, of course, the ubiquitous woman, and was brought home with a wound of which he died the following day. There is no doubt of his wife's unfeigned regret, tempered perhaps by the thought that she had gained rest, and an opportunity for devoting herself to the education of her son and daughter. Of her son Charles, who succeeded to his father's title, it seems to be agreed that he was much more lovable than his sister, despite his escapades and frolics, for which his Lieutenancy in the Dauphin's Gensd'armes was, in measure, responsible. With a note that he became the King's Lieutenant for the Comté of Nantes we may dismiss him from further consideration in the present article. Immediately after her husband's affairs were settled Madame de Sévigné retired from social life for some three years. On her return from seclusion she was only twenty-eight, and more beautiful than before. "She was fair and gay," observed a contemporary, "a smiling picture of virtuous womanhood; the brilliancy of her wit gave lustre to her expressive eyes, shone from her ever-changing pupils, and, as she herself said, was luminous even behind the curtain of her transparent eyelids." Tallemant presented her at this time as "one of the most amiable and witty women of the day. She sings, dances and has a very lively and agreeable wit. She is straightforward, and unable to refrain from saying what she thinks proper. Some one wrote her a letter asking her not to show it to anyone. She allowed several days to go by,

then showed it with the remark: 'If I hatched this much longer it would be a book!'" Another admirer, I forget whom, referred to her as the "young and merry Marquise de Sévigné." Mademoiselle de Scudéry was so touched with her as to adopt her for one of the characters in her novel, "Clélie." Naturally, she was much sought after, but never—once was enough—entertained the thought of a second marriage though she had for suitors, to name only a few, her cousin Bussy-Rabutin, the Prince of Conti, brother of the great Condé, Fouquet the Surintendant of Finance, and her tutor, poor Ménage. It is said that M. Pelletier once found Ménage holding the hands of Madame de Sévigné between his; as he drew them away Pelletier observed: "Ménage, with all your talents, those are the finest works that ever left your hands." One testimony to her charm remains in the circumstance that her rejected suitors became her friends; and another, that for forty years she mixed with the best—and in another sense, perhaps the worst—society of the Capital without the least stain on her reputation; "most obstinately chaste," said one.

In 1663 she presented her witty and beautiful daughter, Frances Margaret, at Court, and six years later married her to Lieutenant-General Francis de Castellane Adhémar de Monteuil, Comte de Grignan, Knight of the Order of the King, Governor of Provence. He was really a gentleman, fond of his wife, with a wholesome respect and admiration for his pretty mother-in-law and her pretty wit. Though not exactly a spendthrift, he had but a meagre knowledge of the coinage of his country, being apparently ignorant of the value of any sum that could not be represented by gold. We cannot wonder at the frequent call for Madame de Sévigné to the rescue. She was frantically fond of her daughter, and refused her

nothing. In one of her earliest letters she confessed: "If you are my preservative, I am but too much indebted to you, and cannot surely too much love the love I have for you." In marrying the girl to a courtier she thought to be always near her; but in less than two years the King, to protect his Spanish frontier, ordered the Comte de Grignan to his post in Provence, and the fatal 5th of February, 1671, witnessed the perpetual separation of mother and daughter. So began the quarter of a century and the long series of letters to Madame de Grignan, disclosing Madame de Sévigné's private life, her habits, work, favourite books, thoughts, the minute details of the society in which she moved and of which she was the soul; told in a variety of moods—joyous, tender, dreamy, compassionate; smiles touched with tears, raillery and wit without bitterness, badinage devoid of licentiousness or prudery, religion without bigotry; simple and natural and displaying but few excesses, an almost hysterical maternal love, an equally strong hatred of libertinism and bad faith, and one careless letter, gaily describing the awful sufferings of and horrible cruelties inflicted on the Breton rebels, for which there is no good excuse. It was sufficient to think the least ill of her daughter to incur the mother's dislike, so, to the sufferings of Madame de Brinvilliers who had sinned in this way, Madame de Sévigné added the callousness of an executioner. Though no prude, her virtue gave her reason for maintaining her right to blush, to be ashamed of and to despise the men and women of gallantry. Of Madame de Lionne, who was an accomplice in her own daughter's undoing, she observes: "For a long time I have noticed this in a number of mothers." What a scathing remark on maternal duty! Again, "the name of Olonne is too difficult to purify," and, on the death of the notorious Princesse de Monaco, all she

says by way of epitaph is: "The pity that she engendered for herself was not sufficient to induce anyone to praise her."

Many of the letters were dated from Paris, where she lived at her mansion, the Hôtel Carnavalet, and in these enchanted mirrors are to be found the Court news and intrigues, the King and his mistresses, the gossip, the literary anecdotes, adventures with the wits and the wisdoms, descriptions of events that became historical—the engagement of the Grande Mademoiselle, the marriage of Madame de Louvois, the death of Vatel, the trial of Fouquet—new plays and new books, church events, wars, festivals, toilettes. Here, too, we meet our old friends the Brancases, the Honvilles, the Montausiers and the rest whose doings and sayings are so much to the fore in Tallement and La Bruyère, and who, but for such records might have dropped into the oubliettes of the past without sign. Other letters have the address of Madame de Sévigné's country seat at Les Roches, near Vitré; these are full of a witty philosophy, social satire, anecdotes of provincial life, country events, musings on religion, and notes on her reading. A third short series was sent from Vichy, where Madame went to endeavour to cure rheumatism with some success. Though Madame de Grignan's answers were destroyed, one does not miss them, they are so readily inferred from the context of those we are considering. Quite early in the correspondence the mother wrote: "Are you sure that my letters are as agreeable to you as you say? I don't feel them to be so when they leave my hands, though I fancy they may become so when they pass into yours. It is indeed lucky, my dear, that you like them, for you are so laden with them that you were otherwise to be seriously pitied. M. de Coulanges wants sadly to know which of your

'ladies' has such a taste for them; we look upon it as a very good sign for her; for my style is so careless that one needs a ready wit and some worldly wisdom to be able to make it out." One can easily guess what the daughter had been writing, and with what eagerness and pleasure Madame de Sévigné's letters were welcomed by, no doubt, the whole Grignan establishment. They kept the post busy. Madame had a good word to say for "Messieurs les postillions who are incessantly trotting the roads to carry your letters back and forth, so that there is never a day when they are not bearing one to you or to me. At all hours of every day there is one somewhere flying through the country. Good fellows! how obliging they are! What a splendid idea is the post!" When one considers the flimsiness of paper, the accidents of continuous and lengthy travel, the infidelities of the couriers, the tricks of Government spies and the ruthless inquisition of the *cabinet noir*, the occasional seasonable ordered disorder of a large household, the careless passing from hand to hand, the number of years covered, it is an "imperishable accident" that so few of these letters have succumbed on their way to a future for which they were never intended. Had Madame de Sévigné but glanced at posterity with the corner of an eye these delightful scribblings might have been classed as "models of epistolary literature," and packed away in that obscure corner within whose bourne lie the other models we are recommended to read—and don't. We are inclined to agree with Voltaire, that these letters "are an excellent criticism upon studied letters of wit, and still more, upon those fictitious letters which endeavour to imitate the epistolary style by a recital of false sentiments and feigned adventures to imaginary correspondents."

Of the rest of Madame de Sévigné's life little is known

beyond what she chose to tell in her letters for the next twenty-five years, and to those we refer you for the best telling. The year 1695 saw her make her last journey to Provence for the marriage of her grandson, the new Marquis de Grignan, with Mademoiselle de St. Amant. In default of being able to write to her daughter, with whom she was staying, she chose to pen a pretty description of the ceremony to her next favourite correspondent, her uncle Coulanges, who must have been at this time in his ninetieth year. Some time later, about October, her daughter fell ill, and the mother, sixty-nine years of age, sustained for six months the rôle of nurse. She herself tells her uncle something of her trials at this harrassing period—how, amongst other matters, she used to rise several times every night to see that all was well. On her daughter's recovery towards the summer of 1696 she, worn-out, became ill in her turn, and of such illness, on the 6th of August pronounced small-pox and incurable, she died on the 20th of that month. Saint Simon, who had so little to tell of her otherwise—we suppose she was not sufficiently notorious for his scandal-loving quill—condoles for his apparent neglect by a graceful obituary:—“Madame de Sévigné, so amiable and of such excellent company, died at the house of her daughter, her idol, who little deserved to be so. I was very intimate with the Marquis de Grignan, her grandson. This lady, by her natural graces, the sweetness of her wit, communicated these qualities to those who had them not; she was besides extremely good, and knew thoroughly many things without ever wishing to appear as though she knew anything.”

It was by the accident of broken pledges that her letters came to be published. After her death some few were lent for private perusal to family friends, who took secret copies. A pamphlet containing fifty was published

at Troyes, and two surreptitious editions appeared at Rouen and the Hague in 1726, with the title "Letters of Marie de Rabutin-Chantal, Marquise de Sévigné, to her daughter, the Comtesse de Grignan." Her name roused such curiosity that these editions soon spread over France. The Grignan family, incensed at the unauthorised use made of the manuscripts, were constrained, in justice to the author, to publish full copies and an authoritative collection—carefully edited and expurgated of the circumstances relating to purely family affairs—was issued in 1734, after which there were, and continue to be, many prints in French and a few in other languages.

The period covered by the letters is the most agreeable in French social and literary history. From the first pages we recognise the growth and tendency of society; its increasing literary character—a peculiarity possessed in a high degree by and existing in no other aristocracy except that of England for the corresponding period. During the years preceding Madame de Sévigné's correspondence, the regency of Anne of Austria was noted for its assassinations, poisonings and a rage for duelling amongst the men and an incredibly abandoned behaviour amongst women even of birth, beauty and wit, unless—which is unlikely with such multifarious corroborative testimony—they have been libelled. Amongst the latter were a few reactionaries who took to the study of metaphysics of a sentimental kind, ultimately developing into *précieuses*, and being admitted to that abode of good morals the Hôtel Rambouillet. Licentiousness and gross orgies were rampant amongst the young nobles until the death of Mazarin. When Louis XIV. asserted himself he, in granting his favours to these libertines, insisted on politeness, elegance and dignity. There remained plenty

of coarseness under the guilt, but as outward propriety was observed public opinion began to discourage ignobleness and dissoluteness. In consequence, disorder and vice became, so to say, less scandalous, decency more obvious, and refinement, expression and wit more simple. Molière depicted and ridiculed the vices and eccentricities of mankind in comedy; La Bruyère satirised them in epigrammatic paragraphs; La Rochefoucauld in maxims; and Madame de Sévigné, an epistolary Molière, confined her observations to the narrower limits of the society around her. When she took her place in the social sphere in the middle of the century and began her letter writing a decade later, French society was really very simple and easy, gracefully animated, pleased with any triviality presented in artistic form; artificial, of course, gaining from a visit, a letter, pleasure out of all proportions to its merits, since it was a matter for interminable discussion with one's associates. Madame de Sévigné has hit off this characteristic in two short phrases: "The vaguest rumour is a fine subject to argue and chat about. That is what we do night and day, morning and evening without aim, without end, and we hope you do likewise." Again: "After dinner we went and chatted in the most pleasant wood in the world; we remained there till six o'clock engaged in every variety of converse, kindly, pleasing, amiable, and affectionate both for you and for me, so that I was much impressed." Here we have the essence of the social life of the time, and can see how, if a mere trifle could furnish a day's gossip, the production of a book would, in a cloud of chatter, make its author famous—till another appeared. So we arrive at the opening phrase of this article, and a certain semi-public popularity of Madame de Sévigné as an epistolary during her life. Her letters as individual written documents, brilliant as works

of art, with just a suspicion of little secrets, but free from slander, made quite a sensation in society. Lucky was the recipient esteemed, and proud was he or she to publish it abroad. A few letters even in these haphazard methods of publication gained special titles for some significance they possessed. For instance: "I can't help telling you what happened this morning," wrote Madame de Coulanges to her friend; "I was told that one of Madame de Thianges' pages had called. I gave orders for his admission; this is what he had to say to me: 'Madame, my mistress begs you to send her two letters of Madame de Sévigné, the letter *au cheval* and the one of the *Prairie*.' I told the page I would take them to Madame de Thianges, and so got rid of him. Your letters are as famous as they deserve to be, as you see; they certainly are delicious, and you are like your letters." As everyone wished to read and possess a copy we cannot wonder at the rush for even an unauthoritative printed edition after the writer's death.

The style of the letters is easy and unstudied. "You know," said she, "I write off-hand which causes my letters to be so loose; but it is my style, and perhaps it has a better effect than one more studied." She never once thought of, or at any rate attempted to write, a fine letter. She could not bear to read them over after they had been written; indeed, the major part are so long that she had no time. "If you find a thousand faults in this letter excuse them, for there is no reading it over for me," was one observation; again, "My letters are written straight off; I never try to improve but I worsen them." She was always animated, picturesque, witty; everything seemed to receive a new beauty from her pen. Perfectly serene and open, she despised pretence, and so escaped the contagion of the pedantry and affectation surrounding her. In

consequence there is an absence of affectation and falsity from her letters that give them a high value as sincere historical documents. Delicate in her sentiments and dainty in manner, her gaiety was always attendant on her heart; the whole correspondence was a spontaneous utterance of her thoughts and feelings. "Truly between friends we must let our pens wander at will; mine always has a loose rein." Broadly educated and widely read, observant and critical, her only superficiality appeared to be in the sphere of politics. It must not be thought from what has been said that she was in any way slipshod in her diction. Observing accurately, thinking clearly, she expressed herself exceptionally well, so that one is never at a loss as to her meaning. But she was never negligent, ordinary or obvious. Her imagination was too vivid to allow of either. A command of language without imagination will produce a style clear, perfect to the intellect, as a white marble column to the eye, a thing of art; add imagination to the gift of tongues and you have distinguished and original verbal invention, brisk, alive, as a tree with music in its foliage answering to every sense—a thing of nature. In Madame de Sévigné's impressions of ordinary life and daily happenings, in her inequalities, vivacities, caprices, judgments, in her devotions, her maternal idolatry, whether prophesying on Racine, or gossiping on chocolate, her imagination dominated everything. Often a superior form of imagination of the kind which glorifies specific objects into symbols, and from the particular makes apparent the universal. Take this passage: "I was at the wedding of Madame de Louvois. How shall I describe it? Splendours, illuminations, all France agog; gold-embroidered dresses, jewellery, braziers, baskets of flowers, throng of carriages, shouts in the streets, torch-lights, crushes, people run over;

in fact, tumult, separation of parties, questions unanswered, compliments unheeded, civilities to anyone, feet entangled in trains; and among all this I catch enquiries after your health, to which, not being able to reply, those who made them remained in their original ignorance. O vanity of vanities!" Here we are given no particulars but the rush and suggestion of words, their incongruity even, help us to an idea of barbarous splendours and surging crowds which would have been lost in the endeavour to detail.

It may sound fulsome to say, but the fact is readily ascertained by a judicious and unscrambled perusal of Madame de Sévigné's numerous letters, that they contain little repetition and no monotony. Fond of books in her youth, she never lost her taste for them throughout her life; at a loss for events, she resorted to criticism and philosophy, and both were of high quality. "It gives a pale colour to the mind to take no pleasure in solid reading," was a remark gathered from her acute personal observation and her private experience. Preferring ideas to poetry, she was charmed with Molière and the Fables of La Fontaine; never tired of Quintillian, Tacitus, St. Augustine, Virgil, and Tasso, who, she says, she "read and enjoyed in all the majesty of the Latin and Italian." Pascal gave her great delight, and through her liking for the "Morals" of Nicole, she has saved him from oblivion in a phrase expressive of her wish to make him into a *bouillon* in order to swallow him whole. Montaigne and Rabelais were ever her favourites, though of the one she has modestly hidden her knowledge and refrained from quoting the other. For Racine she had no feeling; and of Corneille, who only wearied her, she has a happy passage wherein, under a superficial guise of praise, she gives him and his abettor Boileau a shrewd hit apiece: "Long live our old friend Corneille! Let us forgive him his bad

lines for the sake of the divine and sublime beauties which enraptured us; they are inimitable masterpieces. Despreaux speaks even more strongly than I; it is good taste!" Her knowledge of literature and her range of thought induced no less persons than Perrault and the great Boileau himself to refer to her for decision that somewhat absurd and insolvable puzzle, whether the ancients or the moderns were the best. Her decision was replete with the dubiety of an oracle, "The ancients are the finest, and we are the liveliest." To compilers of quotation books her correspondence is a very Tom Tiddler's ground for picking up the gold and silver of her moral philosophy, which, tempered by her religious feeling, is sound if not deep. It most frequently takes the form of advice of a nature well worth having in language which is never didactic. For instance, "My dear, you wish time to pass quickly; you don't know what you ask. You will be taken at your word, he will obey you too readily; and when you wish to stay him he will be beyond your power. I formerly committed the same fault as yourself. I have repented, and though time has not done to me as much mischief as to others, he has not failed by means of the thousand little charms of which he has deprived me, to make me conscious of his passage."

We find this religious thread running throughout Madame de Sévigné's work. Exact religious observances governed her life, tinged her imagination, and found expression in many an eloquent passage. In her earlier days she was piously worldly, in her later ones mundanely pious. There is a peculiar piquancy, a something inherited from the French Renaissance through an ancestry of brave gentlemen and at least one saint, in the medley of religion and worldly gaiety, never frivolous nor unfeeling, that mingled together in her mind as best they might. She

was serious in both, or rather, serious in the one and sincere in the other. As the years sped she became more given to reverie, musings on her daughter in Provence, on her son in the army, on her friends distant or dead. "As regards my life," she wrote, "you know what it is, passed with five or six friends whose society is pleasing to me, in the exercise of a thousand necessary duties which take up time. What vexes me is, that in doing nothing our days pass, and our poor existence is composed of such days, and we grow old and die. I find this very cruel." It was not often that she mourned in this wise. With something of the Orient in her, she bowed her head and took refuge in a kind of providential fatalism which increased with her years without disturbing the serenity of her disposition. We find no deterioration in her brightness, but her language is replete with a graver, more chastened tenderness. Her letter to Coulanges on the death of Louvois is as good as Bossuet at his best. She was never one for hiding her religion under a convent bushel, and she shrank equally from mumming it abroad after the Court fashion, and becoming a *devotée*. We can imagine that she preferred to do, rather than preach. Saint Simon quotes her as saying: "Make religion a little more palpable; it evaporates by dint of being over refined." So we find her, with Madame de La Fayette and Madame de Sablé, soothing the old age of La Rochefoucauld and otherwise fulfilling her own observation that "the heart has no wrinkles." Leaving her religion and worldliness to agree as they might, she did her best not to embroil herself with the world or with her God, and when she quitted the world she, says a contemporary, "found the way straight and the gates open."

Her love for country life was natural, a century in advance of the affected admiration of her day for nature

"cut and carved like an apple-tart." It was pure delight that caused her to make those long sojourns at Livry with her uncle, the Abbé, and at her own chateau Les Roches. Writing from Livry: "I have come here to see the end of the fine weather, and bid good-bye to the leaves. They are still on the trees and have only changed their hue; instead of green they are a gold of so many varied tints, and make a brocade so gorgeous and magnificent that we are tempted to prefer it to the green if only by way of change." In letters from Les Roches we may pick up sufficient charming notes to furnish a country calendar. "I should be so happy in these woods if the foliage would but sing; how lovely it would be to listen to the warbling leaves!" In the spring she refers to the "rapturous month of May, when the nightingale, the cuckoo and the lark usher in the springtime in our woods and forests;" and in the fall, "beautiful crystal days of autumn no longer warm, and yet not cold!" These might be little bits from Gilbert White and Richard Jefferies.

Women excel amongst notepaper and envelopes. They are born letter-writers. Madame de Sévigné, a woman, cannot be compared with a Voiture, a Balzac, a Cyrano, a Howells, a Cowper, a Gray. She dwarfs them all. Lady Montague's eloquence reads feebly beside the overflowing wealth of imagery, glowing colour, wit and sentiment, abandoned, careless, effortless, displayed in the simple, sincere language of the French lady. For portraiture she is St. Simon and Des Réaux at their best; in style and genre she set the type, and is her only follower. True, her particular glory seems to have cost her no effort; nevertheless, it is her legitimate possession. One of the sure signs of a genius, who is such, is his ignorance of the fact. She says somewhere: "If I could only live two hundred years I think I should be a very admirable person;" and here we are, a century beyond her own limit, making that precise observation and envying those who knew her!



A DAY OFF: LANCASTER.

By W. R. CREDLAND.

Weary with wandering in the desert world,
Gladly I turn to thee, old Lancaster,
And view thy hoary towers and calm retreats,
Retrace thy lovely glades, and quiet scenes
Of rural blessedness, and sauntering go
Along thy verdant banks, delightful Lune.

SO chaunts the Rev. Thomas Hathornthwaite, LL.D., late Vicar of St. Anne's, Lancaster, and it is sweet and decorous that the glories of Lancashire's ancient capital should have been sang by a native warbler. But his blank verse poem, "Lancaster, a Retrospect," though gently pleasing, does not stir the blood. There is in it no echo of the clash of arms, no thunder of the impact of furious men. Yet the red rapine of the sword has flamed in dread conspicuousness throughout Lancaster's history, and there have been done within her bounds deeds great enough to rouse the martial ardour of a score of poets. Harp and sword have ever been inseparable—knit together by a wreath of laurel. The mighty hero performs his prodigies of valour, ends in a whirl of glory some high emprise, and instantly the minstrel grasps his lyre and tells the tale of those noble deeds in immortal verse. This is as it should be, for the world is desperately forgetful, and finds

it easier to remember jingling rhyme than even inspired prose; and where, also, is the good of being a hero if your wondrous performances are not going to endure for ever in men's minds. It is therefore decidedly disappointing and unexpected to find that Lancaster still awaits her Tyrtæus, or, shall we rather say, her Kipling to do justice to the stirring story of her past.

Many of the thousand of seekers after the waters of Nepenthe who daily, during the holiday season, pass through the old town on their way to Morecambe, only four miles beyond, must note the picturesqueness of the place, and promise themselves an early visit thereto. They will be amply rewarded, for it is full to overflowing with historic and antiquarian interest. Several magnificent public buildings, too, are here, because it is the county town. Its somewhat narrow and winding streets, with their stone houses, toned by time to a delicate silver grey, are very quaint and stir the sense of charm delightfully within you when you compare them with the depressing rows of black stone and dingy brick of the towns of the manufacturing districts. There is also a fine park, an ancient and beautiful parish church, and that crowning attraction the castle, one of the most perfect and best preserved mementos in the country of a phase in the evolution of man which can never occur again. All this, set like a gem, in the midst of one of the loveliest valleys in our county, through which flows a noble river like a broad line of silver, winding in and out amidst green and tree-shaded landscape until it widens to the west into a great arm of the sea, makes of the old county town a Mecca toward which every devout lover of the beautiful and of the antique must sooner or later turn his steps.

This auspicious day, on which we set forth in search of the picturesque, is one as glorious as any of those

wonderful autumn days which the weather goddess has ever bestowed upon her devotees.

As we glide along the iron way, we note that the trees are not stripped bare as yet, and where a stretch of woodland varies the scene, the rich deep green of the Scotch firs and other perennials tells with fine artistic effect amid the rich burnt-sienna tints of the beeches and oaks, which still retain their dying foliage. When the flat country recedes and the higher lands are neared, the landscape becomes more pleasing, for there is great diversity of colour amid the hills, and this is rendered now brilliant and now vague by the slowly moving shadows of floating clouds. Bathed in warm sunshine, the grey stone of old Lancaster does not look cold, and the welcome we get from a friend awaiting us is warm enough to qualify any amount of chill.

"Time-honoured Lancaster," as the dwellers therein are proud of calling the ancient burgh, has of late become rejuvenated. Its second childhood is bringing increase of wealth, of inhabitants, and of those ameliorations which make life worth living. The name of the magician who has infused new life into its almost moribund veins is "Linoleum." You will not find that name wherewith powerfully to conjure in the "Arabian Nights" or in Grimm's "Fairy Tales," yet it has already wrought wonders in Lancaster that seem as nearly magical as we can attain to in this enlightened age. It has transformed a bleak gorse moor into a park which for "beauty of situation and elegance of arrangement is the finest in the North of England." The late Alderman Williamson dipped into his capacious pockets—stored with nuggets by a relative of "linoleum"—and produced the needful for the purchase, construction, and maintenance of the park. Thus, without cost to that sensitive creature called the

"ratepayer," there was provided by one wave of the wand, as it were, a valuable possession and a thing of beauty which will be a joy for ever to all good Lancastrians. The local historian and enthusiast-in-chief of the town, Mr. "Cross Fleury," becomes lyrical anent the views obtainable from the park, chanting in prose as thus:—

The scenery which the eminences of the park command of land and sea is such as cannot well be surpassed elsewhere. The hills of Westmorland and Cumberland form a delightful boundary to the view as obtained from the summit, long ago christened "The Sixpence." The vessels in Barrow and Fleetwood are discernible to the left; and when the day is bright and clear, Grange and Ulverston are plainly seen across the broad bay of Morecambe. The park has every possible convenience, even to smoke-shelter and drinking fountains; and between some of the natural rocks, which form an oval, the visitor finds a grand surprise in the flowery season, after descending the rock-hewn rustic steps, since what may be termed a miniature Eden breaks suddenly upon the sight. There is a waterfall, artificially constructed to fall over a cliff 80 feet high into a lake below, and also a larger lake likely to please the visitor because of the enormous cliffs which tower above it.

Even now, when the glow and pomp of summer is past, the park remains a lovely oasis amid its somewhat wild surroundings. The old hills and mounds have received a touch of art which has beautified instead of spoiling them, and the shrubs, which have been allowed to remain almost untouched, help to retain the appearance of the unrestraint and waywardness of nature.

Another creation of the magician aforesaid is the Storey Art Institute. This is a handsome stone edifice, erected at the "costs and charges" of Sir Thomas Storey, and given by him to the town, in commemoration of the great

year of Jubilee, 1887. The building contains the Art Gallery, a fine room in which the nucleus of a permanent collection of works of art already enriches the walls. Among the oil paintings is a fine example of the strong work of Clara Montalba, an harbour scene, with shipping and boats, bathed in the deep yellow glow of sunset. There is also accommodation for the School of Art, for the Technical School, for the Free Library, and rooms for the reading of newspapers and periodicals. The establishment is one of the most up-to-date of those thoroughgoing, all-round, go-ahead educational institutions which are peculiarly the product of the present day, and it is already doing much useful and excellent work.

The advancing prosperity of the county town is also shown in the activity of its Council. The principal streets are already paved with wood, the electric light glows like a galaxy of minor moons everywhere, and the trams are run by electric traction. Some of the "rookeries" have been cleared away, other street improvements are in contemplation, and a plot of land in Dalton Square, on which it is proposed to erect a new Town Hall, has been acquired by the Corporation. The clearing away of things old and dilapidated is one of the most necessary of sanitary processes. Yet, alas! it is also terribly harrowing to the soul of the artist. That which is ancient and tumbledown is almost always picturesque, and when all the "bits" in our old towns and villages have succumbed to that unlovely tyrant, the trapped drain, what will become of the poor artist? We fancy it was Ben. Disraeli who asserted that civilisation was a question of sewage, and it would seem that this dark saying is applicable in more than one direction. The particular rookery recently wiped out in Lancaster, was China Lane, which we were assured had long been a notorious nuisance. Murders and suicides

had occurred there, and its narrowness and darkness were a protection to the rowdy and evil-minded. Now it has gone for ever, and not even a local artist or antiquary, so far as we could ascertain, shed a tear over its destruction.

History in masses has gathered round Lancaster and her ancient castle, and many Dry-as-dusts have found highly congenial employment in grubbing amongst her records. They have embodied their researches and discoveries in more than one solid tome. The latest of these historians, and the most substantial—judging by the weight and thickness of his book—is a gentleman who modestly hides his identity under the pseudonym of “Cross Fleury.” In his volume of 612 pages you shall read all that was known of Lancaster’s “strange eventful” history up to the date of 1891. It were well, however, for your mental digestion to take Mr. Kellet Rigbye in small doses, for truly he is somewhat solid, and the use of method is as hidden a mystery to him as it was to the great philosopher Descartes. On a sheep’s head, as an old joker has it, there is much fine confused eating, and the saying may be applied to the book of our friend “Cross Fleury.” But there is plenty of it, and a judicious use of the selective faculty is all that is necessary in order to derive much satisfaction and instruction from his work. It makes the presentation to you of any historical details quite unnecessary, for the book is readily accessible. Nor need much time be devoted to describing the castle. You can be personally conducted through it and see all the sights for sixpence. You will be shown some gruesome things in the “Drop Room,” amongst them being a chair made for one Jane Scott, who was wheeled out on it to the scaffold on March 22nd, 1828. This murderess had become so weak during her imprisonment that she could not walk

to the drop, so this stool, fitted with castors, was made, and she was run out on it. This was not in the "good old times," mind you, but only some seventy-five years ago. Then you can regale your eye on a short chain having a piece of rope attached. This was the old form of rope used for hanging, which gave so short a drop that the victim frequently struggled for many minutes after his fall. Pleasant, rather! and that, too, was not in the "good old times."

Stories of the awful punishments inflicted for crimes now deemed slight, and of the miscarriage of justice, terrible enough to "harrow up the soul," are also told to you, till you sicken at the savagery of old time repression, and wonder how man can possibly have been so inhuman to man. On the highest point of the old Norman keep is the watch-tower, now called John O'Gaunt's chair. This nomenclature is a charming bit of poetic license, for there is no resemblance to a chair about it, and—let this be breathed low, lest the rabid antiquary should hear, and rise up and slay me—it is extremely doubtful whether John of Gaunt, the great Duke of Lancaster, ever set foot in Lancaster at all. But from this so-called chair of his the view obtainable is magnificent, and even the dread ordeal of the garrulous guide is worth braving in order to win this splendid consolation. As your eye slowly passes from point to point you recall that Macaulay did not overlook the fine situation of this grand old keep when writing that rousing poem, "The Armada," the last lines of which run thus:—

When Skiddaw saw the fire that burned on Gaunt's embattled pile,
And the red glare on Skiddaw roused the burghers of Carlisle.

Happily the Castle's associations are not exclusively confined to war and crime. There is fun even in them, produced with reckless prodigality when the place was used as a debtor's prison. Our friend of the "Flowery Cross" tells us of the doings of the debtors with considerable verve, therefore we will take another bit out of him. He says:—

"Gone to Lancaster" and "Hansbrow's Hotel" were popular sayings in the good old days when Lancaster Castle was a debtor's prison. Letters were often addressed to "Hansbrow's Hotel," the governor of the Castle being a gentleman of that name. In 1837 there were between 300 and 400 debtors in this "Hotel," wherein beer, wine, tobacco, but no spirits were allowed, and where those who could afford might have any kind of food or clothing they wished, and any quantity, with the right of receiving friends from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. In this strange hostelry there were apartments to be had whose comforts and privileges were regulated in accordance with the debtor's purse or the liberality of his friends. These apartments were humorously styled "The Tap," "The Snug," "The Pigeons," "The Chancery," "The Constables," "The Pin Box," "The Smugglers," "The Albion," "The Belle Vue," "The Song Room," "The Quakers." Many games were allowed and various political "larks" indulged in, including stump orations and sham elections in which, strange to state, the Tories were mostly victorious. There was even a bowling green at the service of the "wealthier" debtors. But the poor, hardup, insolvent did not find Lancaster Castle a bed of roses. Two ounces of bread daily, $4\frac{1}{2}$ oz. of oatmeal daily, and $4\frac{1}{2}$ oz. of salt and 10 lbs. of potatoes weekly formed but a miserable fare, while others, with willing friends, could be provided for and enjoy comfortable rooms, fire and lighting, and even musical entertainment in the shape of a brass band.

This, too, has passed away "into the ewigkeit." There is no more laughter in Lancaster Castle, and should you now hear sounds, they will, doubtless, be those of weeping and the gnashing of teeth.

You who are a lover of literature will naturally take your modest quencher at the "King's Arms" Hotel, for this is the successor of that old hostelry, where that delightful writer and rare good fellow, Charles Dickens, put up when tramping on his "lazy tour" with another idle apprentice. Therein he wrote the "Tale of a Bridal Chamber," and he has also given us his impressions of the "good old inn, established in a good old house, an inn where they give you bridecake every day after dinner," and where the visitor "can eat bridecake without the trouble of being married, or of knowing anybody in that ridiculous dilemma." Dickens stayed at the "King's Arms" in 1857, and again in 1862, with Wilkie Collins as companion. The old house contained antiquities of great rarity and interest, and numerous enough to stock a museum. There was fine Gobelin tapestry, valued at £6,500, old clocks, fifteenth century furniture, China, venetian glass, and a host of other valuable objects. Ruskin deemed the collection worthy of his pen, and in his "Ariadne Florentina" he has somewhat of interest to say concerning that which he saw in the old King's Arms Hotel.

Lancaster's most celebrated sons, William Whewell and Sir Richard Owen, were both scientists, and their achievements have been sang in verse not unworthy of its theme by a local bard, Mr. William Sanderson. Mr. Sanderson, whom the gods had endowed with a little of the real "divine afflatus," wrote some fine verse, which was published after his early death in a small volume, for the benefit of the author's family. This is the manner of his singing of Whewell and of Owen:—

And thine 'tis Whewell, with thy master mind,
To teach the workings of the Great First Cause,
How wisely are sun, moon, and stars designed,
Moving unerring by fixed mystic laws;
Happy for man that they are so confined
Which to reflect upon should "give him pause"
For from its course did one a moment fly,
Ruin would rush throughout both earth and sky.

And Owen! though you differ in pursuit,
Worthy you are to be your friend's compeer;
In Cuviers' steps, with genius as acute,
Onward you press; success in your career;
Beasts, birds, and insects, reptiles, fishes mute,
Your speculation—then, with judgment clear,
As you compare their fame with that of man
You trace throughout one systematic plan.

For the legal mind there is much fascination in the word "Lancaster." Many mighty wrestlers in the arena of the law have fought their battles there, and there have won their fame. But for us law unless wedded to literature is anathema, and it is not while in the Courts, but when sitting in that room haunted by the shade of Dickens, that the mind harks back to a story concerning a poor lawyer but notable man of letters, one Boswell to wit, which even yet has not lost its savour. It is told of him that at a certain Assizes at Lancaster, James was found lying very drunk upon the pavement. His "friends" next morning sent him a brief with instruction to move for a writ "Quare adhaesit pavimento." Boswell was taken in by the speciousness of the thing, and went hunting round to obtain information, but without result. When he solemnly moved for the writ the judge was astonished. He thought he had never heard of such a writ, and mildly inquired

what it could be that "adhaeres pavimento." A member of the bar kindly explained. "My lord," he said, "Mr. Boswell last night 'adhaeset pavimento.' There was no moving him for some time. At last he was carried to bed, and he has been dreaming about himself and the pavement."

With this ancient story may fittingly be ended our desultory chat concerning Lancashire's beloved county town, which is so old, and at the same time so new that as you pass by the Castle on your way to the railway station it is with something of a shock you note that the walls which have braved a thousand years are thrown into high relief by the white glare of the electric light.





NICHOLAS FERRAR.

By the Rev. W. C. HALL.

IN a previous paper I ventured upon the statement that an interesting estimate might be attempted of what literature and practical piety owe to Nicholas Ferrar. The thought remained in my mind until it brought me to contemplate this essay as a natural companion, if not a literary sequel, of what I have before written on George Herbert and Richard Crashaw; not, however, with any satisfaction to myself that I should be able to present an adequate account, but simply with the hope that some further narration of a story that has already been well told would incidentally afford a few suggestions towards the wider appreciation of my subject. I cannot add anything to the published facts of Ferrar's life. Such as one might discover or infer, after the careful and almost complete records of others, would not appreciably enlarge our knowledge of him and his community at Little Gidding, nor would they sensibly increase the fascination which has attracted here and there those, the few, whom I have heard described as his lovers and students. Rather shall I make excerpts from the several biographies I have consulted, with a view to an impression, not, I would confess, to the presentation of a critical study.

Seeking at bookshops a few months ago volumes which for my own possession I was unable to obtain, as sometimes

happens when one has need, I was told by a manager, who himself turned out to be specially interested in seventeenth century worthies—a revelation by no means common, I opine—that Father——, who ministered hard by my own door, was a “Ferrar man.” A Ferrar man; the expression gave me pause, and I reflected what later I satisfied myself was a fact, that after nearly three centuries there were some who held in a chief place the memory of a man whom, like others of his generation, we are beginning in these days reasonably to appreciate.

While in the case of others of his time we complain regretfully that so slight information has come to us, Ferrar's life, as I have already remarked, has been well told, unusually well; indeed, I dare hold that a much less detailed account than we have in any of his biographies would not fail to represent him to us admirably and adequately. For men of his type, by nature and disposition recluses, do not require a sumptuous chronicle, a thing of compact tailoring, which after all only leads us into the plight of regarding as men of action, in the popular sense, those who in the full sense were men of being, whose lives had no extensive superficies of outward incident, but were intense and profound with the indescribable quality we simply call life. The student, the poet, the saint, is such largely as he baffles the common observation of the world. His being is no multitudinous course of events, and yet it is more complex than that of others whose every movement and breathing is recorded. Of the man of action you do ask what he had for dinner—and every advertisement of a patent food tells you the cubic measurement of muscle, the store and reserve of stamina, the general avoirdupois and essence of patronising humanity—but you do not ask “what porridge had John Keats?” and of the man who away from the world spends his days

in saintly offices you do not demand the paltry table of all his occupations. In the one case you desire all the details, in the others you are satisfied with a hint of the mystery which lay, an ineffable thing of eloquence, in the soul of the poet and the saint.

So, in the case of Ferrar, we could omit from our notice much of the secular incident, for somehow in the reading of his biography, even that most loving narrative by his brother John, we half forget the earlier facts of intellectual precocity—although this has probably been exaggerated—of extensive knowledge of cities and men, of practical ability in public service, to gather and bring to concentration the impressions provided for us of the sweet life of peerless devotion spent with kindred spirits, his own kindred, in their simple retreat. Therefore I shall not endeavour to condense accounts which themselves are succinct, and avoiding that fidelity of treatment which is akin to the plagiarism of a lazy compiler, I shall rather bring into this paper only those facts and incidents which touch more directly upon the personality of Ferrar as it is to be chiefly regarded.

First, then, a brief account of his parents, not because it is customary in biography to trace ancestry, but because he seems to have derived from his father and mother qualities which in his different capacities pronounced themselves very definitely. These need not be particularised; they suggest themselves.

Of Nicholas Ferrar, the father, we learn that he was "a gentleman by birth, of the family of Ferrars of Yorkshire, a merchant of good reputation in the city, and, as they term it, an alderman's fellow or companion, a merchant-adventurer, trading to the East and West Indies, Spain, Flanders, Germany, etc.; who kept (as they term it) a good free table, and constantly wanted not only

company of his own rank, but often had men of eminency to dine with him, yea, lords, knights, ladies, etc.; and Sir John Hawkins, Sir Francis Drake, Sir Walter Raleigh, all gallant seamen, with whom he was an adventurer, evermore affecting the planting of Christian religion in the new world, and advancing trade and commerce for a common good, as well as his own lawful trading." He was a shareholder in the Virginia Company, in which his two sons, John and Nicholas, played a conspicuous part among the directors; and it was in his great parlour, which was ever thrown open for hospitality, that most of the meetings of the Company were held. He is said to have been of an impetuous nature, hot-tempered, but exceptionally generous and sympathetic. Diligent in commerce, he was no less zealous in religion, and it was at his cost that not only was his parish church of St. Bennett Sherehog, repaired and re-seated, but a preacher provided for it. Equally devoted was he to the State as to the Church, and willingly lent £300 upon a privy seal, for which Queen Elizabeth writ him esquire. Francis White, later Bishop of Carlisle, Norwich and Ely, whom he brought to St. Bennett's, declared, in his funeral sermon that "he never came into old Mr. Ferrar's company but that saying of our Saviour Christ came into his mind when he saw Nathanael coming unto Him: Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile. For truly Mr. Ferrar was such a man, and all that knew him must needs acknowledge him so to be."

His wife, Mary, was of the ancient Cheshire family of the Woodnoths, of Shavington, where they had enjoyed the lordship for five hundred years. John Ferrar tells us that "there were few women, as all that knew her can testify, that exceeded her in comeliness of her body, excellent beauty, of fair, modest, and sober deportment.

grave in her looks, humble in her carriage towards all people, superlative in discretion, of few words, but as occasion offered itself; but when she spake it was, as Bishop Linsell (her son Nicholas's tutor, that knew her many a year, and to her dying day, and ever called her mother) would say of her that "he knew no woman that passed her in eloquency (which was natural to her), in judgment and wisdom, as he did ever admire her; and for her devotion towards God, her piety, her charity, her love to God's Word, her constant daily reading Scripture, her singing Psalms, when she sat at work with her children and maids about her and hearing them read chapters, and her often reading in the Book of Martyrs, her going to the church prayers Wednesdays and Fridays, her having heard, as it was computed in her lifetime, twelve thousand sermons (for she was also addicted that way). And what good use she made of all these things, let the world speak it; her deeds will praise her in the gates of the city and the country in the open fields abroad. In a word, it was no wonder that such a mother should bring forth such a son as Nicholas Ferrar was." Although in these preliminaries I am perhaps running into somewhat of a disproportion, I cannot refrain from quoting further words attributed to her husband. "I must give my wife this testimonial," he said on his death-bed, "that never, I think, man had the like in all kinds; and these forty-five years we have lived together I must say of her, she never gave me cause to be angry with her, so wise and good she is. You all know I was by nature (which God pardon) both quick and choleric and hasty, which she also will forgive." This tribute of the husband and the son is entirely beautiful praise, but no less merited.

Nicholas Ferrar, the subject of our paper, third son and fifth child of the above, was born on the 22nd of February,

1593, and christened in the parish church of St. Mary Stayning, Mark Lane, London, on the 28th of the same month, a day "which he registered as more memorable than the birthday, esteeming it a greater favour to be received into the Catholic Church than to come into the world." His brother John describes him as "a lovely child, fair, and of bright hair like his mother"; and one must add that he was active, quick-witted and precocious. This last fact is evidenced by his early love of books and by an originality and quaintness of manner very similar to what has been observed in other children of exceptional intellect. It is related that he would often forget his meals as he pored over the "English Chronicle" or the "Book of Marytrs," in which he learnt the story of Robert Ferrar, Bishop of St. David's, who was burnt at Carmarthen in 1555—a story specially fascinating to him, although the Bishop does not appear to have been of his ancestry—while the "Bible was the book in the world to him dear and precious." Two anecdotes will illustrate his precocity in another direction. About the year 1698 the Bishop of London held a confirmation at St. Magnus's Church, whereat Ferrar managed to present himself a second time for the "laying-on of hands," explaining, on being questioned over this irregular contrivance, "I did it because it was a good thing to have the Bishop's prayers and blessings twice, and I have got it." On another occasion, when his mother was making for her children the dainty lace-trimmed collars worn at the time, he besought her, "Make my bands little and plain, like those of Mr. Wotton, for I would be a preacher as he is."

Before he was eight years old he joined his brothers John and Erasmus at Emborne, near Newbury, Berkshire. Mr. Brooks boarded besides "thirty gentlemen and merchants' sons of London, keeping a schoolmaster in his

house to teach all of them; he only had an eye upon their learning and good manners, who himself was a very severe man, and with his very looks kept all his boarders in exceeding great awe and reverence." He had forsaken the City, where in 1593 he had been instituted Vicar of St. Olave, Jewry, "to preside over children in a country retirement, believing his charitable pains amply rewarded by the prayers of such happy innocents." But while preparations were being made to send him to this school—I must quote at length from his brother's account—"it pleased God to permit a sore and grievous temptation to befall Nicholas Ferrar, that wonderfully perplexed his body and mind, *whether there was a God, and how to be served*. One night, which was cold and frosty, he riseth out of his bed, for sleep he could not, and goes down to a green grass-plot in the garden, and throws himself upon his face on the ground, and with extreme perplexity of grief, sobs, sighs, and abundance of tears, earnestly with all his strength, humbly begged of God that *He would put into his heart the true fear and care of His Divine Majesty, and that this fear and love of God might never depart out of his mind, and that he might know how he must serve Him*. After much bitter weeping he felt his heart much eased, and comforts began to come to it, and to have an assurance of God, and the doubt began to pass away and his heart was much cheered. He then rose up, and went up to his chamber to bed again, but could not sleep but little, yet he found daily more and more confirmation in his soul, and so had all his lifetime after a more than ordinary fear of God in him, and His presence, which continued in him to his dying day."

At Emborne School great care was bestowed upon the religious instruction of the pupils. They had set times for learning the Psalter, the Epistles and Gospels, and the

Catechism, and we are told that none of the scholars "performed their tasks of this kind (nor indeed of any kind) so constantly, carefully, and easily" as Ferrar, a statement worth bearing in mind as one would recognise the influences which confirmed what would seem to have been an early resolution or shaped his after life. Of the secular side of his education John Ferrar tells us that "such a progress he made in Latin, logic and Greek, as he was the prime scholar of his years, to the admiration not only of his schoolmaster, but of Mr. Brooks himself. Mr. Brooks grew proud of his scholar, and, though he was not attained to above thirteen years of age, earnestly persuaded his parents to remove him to the University of Cambridge. "For," said he, "he loseth precious time, and is more than fit for the University."

Accordingly he was entered at Clare Hall as a pensioner, his parents thinking it proper that he should become a fellow-commoner only after his first year's approbation and merit. Dr. Robert Byng, in a letter to Mr. Barnabas Oley, gives an interesting account of Ferrar at this time, in which he says: "As for the time of his admission into our College of Clare Hall, he was, as I did then guess by his stature and dimensions, about thirteen years of age, when yet his deportment was such as spake him more a man than many are at four-and-twenty; there was so sweet a mixture in him of gravity with affability and modesty with civility." This description amply covers the circumstance that he does not appear to have made many companions among his fellow-students, being regarded by them as "rather old-fashioned and sententious." The truth is that he was precocious in more than intellect; family sorrows, as the death of his brother Erasmus, had made him grave beyond his years, melancholic, sometimes almost impetuous with anguish. Once he writes: "My

soul hath been almost rent; I may truly say that from my youth up Thy terrors I have suffered with a troubled mind." With his elders he was exceptionally popular, and gained their close and deep affection, particularly that of his tutor, Augustine Lindsell, the Senior Fellow of Clare, afterwards Bishop of Peterborough and Hereford. For seven years at Cambridge he studied with diligence and severity. "He worked so hard that his window was known by the light which glimmered earliest in the winter mornings, and was last put out at night"; but his studies were frequently broken by attacks of ague, an ailment very common at the time, and one that in Ferrar's case, who was of delicate constitution, was not likely to be allayed by the humid atmosphere of the Fens. His chief relaxation was found in visits to his eldest sister, Susannah, who was married to John Collett, and lived at Bourne, about ten miles distant. In her home he would catechise the children and give them fatherly counsel, a circumstance which, in spite of his young years, not being regarded as pert or supercilious, enables one partly to understand the wonderful influence he exercised over those who later gathered themselves together into the community of Little Gidding.

He was made B.A. in 1610, and soon after, on the first occasion, was unanimously elected Fellow of his College. He remained at Cambridge about three years longer. In the midsummer of 1613 he should have received his M.A. degree, but his attacks of ague became so serious that he was advised to leave the University at once and endeavour to recruit his health on the Continent. This advice was accepted, after great reluctance on the part of his parents, and on his, as a "pathetically kind" letter he wrote to them reveals to us, with the sense that he would not return. "If I go before, you must come shortly after;

think it is but a little forbearance of me. It was God that gave me to you, and if He takes me from you be you not only content but most joyful that I am delivered from this vale of misery and wretchedness." He makes a preparative disposition of his goods: £5 worth of books to his College, some to his "worthy tutor Lindsell and Cousin Theophilus"; and "if any of my sister's sons prove a scholar the rest may be given to him."

The Princess Elizabeth, a girl of sixteen, had married Frederick, the Elector Palatine—some will still maintain that Shakespeare's "Tempest" was a masque in honour of these nuptials—and was about to journey to her new home. It chanced that Dr. Scott, the Master of Clare, procured for Ferrar a place in the royal retinue as an attendant on the Princess, a position which, it may be noted, was probably gained also by Francis Quarles. So, on April 23rd, 1613, after the M.A. degree had been conferred upon him by a special grace—another slight evidence of his popularity with the heads of the University—he sailed from Margate, and reached Flushing after four days. As had been predicted by his doctor, during the passage he lost his ague, "cleared away perhaps by sea-sickness, perhaps also by the keen salt breezes and the novelty and liveliness of the gay company among whom he travelled." The bridal party proceeded by the Hague and Amsterdam, but when it quitted Holland for the Palatinate Ferrar resigned his position, and continued his journey alone. He had won his way into the good graces of the young Princess, and it was expected that he would be promoted as her secretary; but this office was left for Quarles, Ferrar having no taste for the life of a courtier.

I shall not deal closely with his Continental travels, which occupied five years, as precise details are largely

matters of conjecture, and for a reason which I have stated. It is known that he kept a diary during these years, no doubt most carefully, as always his manner was, but this, like what may have been other of the most interesting and original of his writings, is lost. His course was to Hamburg, Leipsic, Prague, Nuremburg, Ulm, Spires, Augsburg, Vienna, Padua, Malta, Venice, Rome, Marseilles, Madrid, San Sebastian, and back to Dover.

At the various places Ferrar visited, particularly at Leipsic, where he stayed a considerable time, he sought out and gathered round him both eminent masters and able artisans, all and any persons who could inform him with general learning and local knowledge. "Painters, weavers, dyers and smiths were much at his lodgings, and at his service, which enabled him to treat with artisans in their proper terms; he could maintain a dialogue with an architect in his own phrases; he could talk with the mariners in their sea terms, knowing the word for almost every rope and pin in a ship. Such was his curiosity in all the fine parts of learning and knowledge, an affection which is last mortified in a polite and a capacious mind, that now made the great world his other book." Padua, with its law students, its almost cosmopolitan population, its eager life, secular and religious, would seem most to have impressed him. Its ecclesiastical side especially would appeal to his mind. There was the Theatine house with its life of retirement, prayer, and fasting, "for which he seems to have longed from his boyhood, with a longing that struggled for mastery with his keen thirst for knowledge"; there was the congregation of the oratory, composed of laymen and secular priests, with its daily discourses on the Gospels, the virtues and vices, church history, and the lives of the saints; there, too, was

concentrated the influence of the Spanish mystics. Already disposed to the life of retirement, he found much in Padua to quicken and encourage him; and one has no matter of surprise in that he gave himself to it readily, so soon as worldly duties which came into his way were satisfactorily discharged.

During these travels he made a large collection of engravings of sacred subjects, which latter formed an interesting part of the famous Harmonies; but whether they were procured definitely for the purpose we do not know; the probability, of course, is that they were.

It was Ferrar's desire, on his return to England, to go back to Cambridge in order to continue his study of medicine. At the same time, the Chair of Geometry at Gresham College was offered to him, although he does not appear to have had any great qualifications for it. But scholarship in neither subject was to occupy him. For the next six years his energies were given to the company founded in 1606 for the development and government of Virginia. Out of this Virginia Company sprang the New Bermuda Company, and in both Ferrar's father was in more than one way specially interested. In his great parlour, which must have welcomed very many of the more vigorous spirits of the time, were held its weekly meetings. So it befel that Sir Edwin Sandys, the Treasurer of the Company, struck with the ability and capacity of Nicholas, secured his help in a general way, and delegated to him the larger part of the secretarial work. But I shall pass over this period of Ferrar's life, simply saying that in the discharge of his duties towards the Company during a period of extreme gravity, as also in his brief Parliamentary career, he showed himself to be a man of exceptional business power and a defender and advocate of his side by no means to be disregarded.

Interesting as is the history of these six years in itself, and doubly interesting by reason of the contrasts it presents against his earlier and later life—some things remained with him for regret—we do not see the real Ferrar in commerce and politics, just as we do not see the real George Herbert, his friend and brother, in the functions of a courtier, splendid in that fine dress, with his hand upon a jewelled sword. These were not the men, these the world was too much with for their peace; but yonder, in the secluded village, the hamlet without the city, in the little church whose very bricks are like the virtues, beside a simple altar, a shrine where the Real Presence has often entered into the life of a humble soul, there will you come upon them. But take the shoes from off your feet, for the ground is holy, and the stillness, which you may not mar, is like the voice that came after the wind, the earthquake and the fire.

The Virginia Company collapsed, and Ferrar set himself to the working out of a resolution which, as far as one can infer, had always been cherished very deeply in his heart. In his love of the celibate life he had probably been confirmed at Padua; his longing for retirement, for prayer and fasting, was as natural to him as life itself. And if inducement were required towards the course he was about to run he, sensitive over all matters religious, could find it in the generally neglected state of the Church and in the spiritual forces, such as that of Lancelot Andrewes at Winchester, and of John Donne at St. Paul's, which were beginning to rouse the interest of men and call them to a deeper sense of the higher things of thought and life.

In May, 1625, his mother, then a widow of five years, completed the purchase of the lordship of Little Gidding, "a depopulated parish turned entirely into pasture land,

with a large ruinous mansion, a single shepherd's cottage, and a small church used as a hay-barn, situated in a solitary neighbourhood twelve miles from Huntingdon." In the summer of this year the plague broke out in London, and Mrs. Ferrar removed to her daughter's house at Bourne. Nicholas stayed in the City until he had finally wound up business in connection with the affairs of his father. Then he joined his brother John at Little Gidding; and within three days of his arrival his mother, although she was seventy years of age, and had been advised by him to remain away for a month, in case he had not wholly escaped the plague, rode from Bourne to Gidding, a distance of fifteen miles. "Their greeting was like that of old Jacob and his son Joseph, after his father had given him over for lost, while he was providing for the support of his family. Such an interview must needs be passionately kind and zealously devout, both of them blessing God, and she again blessing her son. He prayed her to enter the rude house and to repose herself after her journey. '*Not so,*' said she. '*Yonder I see the church; let us first go thither to give God thanks that He has brought me to this good place and has restored me my son,*' It was told her *there was no getting into it, for as yet there had not been time to empty the hay that was in it, which was intended shortly to be done.* By the sacrilege and profaneness of the former inhabitants of Gidding the house of God was turned into a hay-barn and a hog-sty. But this good woman had somewhat of Augustine's mother Monnica in her devotion, of whom that father affirms, that *if a dragon stood between her and the altar she would have stepped through him to advance thither.* So this divine soul persisted in her ardent resolution, and thrusting into the church a little way, she kneeled and prayed and wept there about a quarter of an hour. Then she charged

her son to send instantly for all the workmen about the house, which were many, and commanded them to *fling out all the hay at the church windows, and to cleanse it as well as they could for the present.* She was obeyed, and she saw all this done before she would stir or set her foot in the house."

Under her direction the church, which is a small brick building of chancel and nave, without aisles, was re-floored, and its walls wainscoted for warmth. It was re-seated as a college chapel, with stalls and benches running east and west, and special seats reserved on each side for visitors. The chancel was raised a step above the rest of the building, and had a pulpit and reading-desk of equal height, as indicating the equal value of the offices performed at each, and for altar a massive table of cedar wood. The house or hall or mansion—as it has been variously described—has entirely disappeared. It stood about forty paces from the church. It must have been of good size, as it amply accommodated over thirty persons—one accounts says over forty—of which number no less than sixteen were the children of John and Susannah Collett, besides visitors from different parts and neighbours who had occasion to partake of the open hospitality of the Ferrars. At one end were the apartments of the men and boys, including three schoolmasters appointed to instruct the children of the family in English and Latin, arithmetic and writing, and music; at the other those of the women and girls; while Nicholas Ferrar, who acted as the general superintendent, had his chamber and study in the middle. On the ground floor was the large dining-parlour, rooms for guests and poor, a dispensary, in connection with which the women as well as Nicholas would seem to have had their particular duties, and an infirmary for the isolation of sick persons. Upstairs was

the great chamber where Mrs. Ferrar sat in her large armchair with the little children about her, as they learnt their lessons, and the elder girls, notably Mary Collett, of whom we have such a beautiful picture in "John Inglesant," as they embroidered and did "fair writing." Here, until the work necessitated the use of a separate room, the Harmonies were compiled. It was plainly furnished, and hung with simple tapestry. The house as a whole had few decorations or embellishments, being ordered purely with a view to convenience and comfort, but in the parlour there was Mrs. Ferrar's interesting tablet, setting forth the friendship required of guests, in the dining-room and Nicholas Ferrar's study choice texts of Scripture boldly and neatly transcribed, and on the outer door a brass plate with the inscription: "Flee from evil and do good, and dwell for evermore." In the grounds was the schoolhouse built on the site of a large dovecote which Nicholas pulled down because the pigeons wrought no little havoc in the cornfields of his neighbours.

Thus briefly, in a rough fashion, I have sketched the homestead of the Ferrars and the beginnings of their settlement at Little Gidding, where they were for about a generation to live out that simple life which brought to them the veneration and love of all who discovered its reason and meaning, and the reproaches and slanders of others, not so penetrative of the truth, who, against any manner which did not keep with the mode of a somewhat pharisaic Puritanism were only too ready with imprecation and persecution. Time alone gives us the perspective of the deeds of men.

Whether it was the original intention of Nicholas Ferrar that the community should have that definitely religious character which it soon assumed is perhaps a matter for conjecture. The narrative which tells us of his deter-

mination to seek the orders of a deacon does not fully enlighten us; but the question is not one which on either side of it calls for discussion here. Having some time before acquainted his old tutor Lindsell with his intention, early in the morning of Trinity Sunday, 1626, he went with him to Westminster Abbey, and was made deacon by Laud, then Bishop of St. David's. "Towards evening"—I must give you the words of his brother—"he came home to his mother, and prayed her to hear him read what he had to show her written in vellum, which he drew forth of his breast, which was the solemn vow he had therein made to God, written and signed with his own hand, and the effect was: *Seeing God had so often heard his most humble petitions, and had delivered him out of many most imminent dangers of soul and body, and now had brought his family out of most desperate calamities, whereinto they might have fallen if His mercy had not been infinite, he should now set himself to serve him in such a calling, etc.* His mother (and other friends that stood, but were long time silent) then, falling upon his neck, most tenderly weeping and kissing him, most affectionately and devoutly blessed him, most heartily praying to God to give him long life, and that he might be filled with God's Holy Spirit daily more and more, to His greater glory, and good of her and his family; adding: '*I will also, by the help of my God, set myself with more care and diligence than ever to serve our good Lord God, as it is all our duties to do, in all we may.*'"

I shall relate in the fewest possible words the manner of life at Little Gidding. On Sundays the family rose at five o'clock in winter and four in summer. After prayers in their several chambers the daughters and younger children repeated to Ferrar such passages of Scripture as he had set for their learning. About nine the bell rang

for church, and all proceeded in order, the masters in gowns leading the way, followed by John Ferrar and Mr. Collett, Nicholas in his surplice and hood, with his mother and the rest two and two together. They all made low obeisance as they entered, and took their appointed places in the church. Divine service performed, they returned in the same order. Then Nicholas heard the Psalm-children, children of the village, repeat their Psalms, "for which they were to have for each Psalm a penny, and some would gain twopence, some threepence, some fourpence." At half-past ten they went again to the church when the minister of Steeple Gidding, a quarter of a mile away, preached, after Nicholas had read the second service. The family having returned again to the house, a hymn was sung, accompanied with the organ; then, grace said, dinner was brought in, at which the children stood. "Whilst they were thus feeding their bodies, one whose turn it then was read a chapter in the Bible, that so their ears and hearts might not want the best spiritual food; which done he also sat down to meat, and lost not by that deed." At two all the party went to a sermon at Steeple Gidding. Home again, in the great chamber they repeated all the Psalms which on week-days were said at set times. Until five or six they were free, when they came again into the great parlour for supper, at which there were readings from the Book of Martyrs. At eight the bell rang for prayers, which said, all the children came and asked old Mrs. Ferrar's blessing and bade each other good-night.

On week-days the earliest morning offices were the same as those of Sunday. At six o'clock the Psalm for that hour was said, each hour having a certain Psalm; then one said from memory one of the heads of the Harmony of the Gospels—which heads were so disposed that each month

the whole Harmony was repeated. A hymn of morning prayer was sung by all, and each said a sentence of Scripture, such as he thought good at that time. Then they went to church in their regular order. At seven more Psalms and another head of the Harmony were said, and a hymn of one verse was sung:—

Thus angels sung, and so do we,
To God on high all glory be:
Let Him on earth His peace bestow,
And unto men His favour show.

Then the children went to the school, and the rest of the family to their several employments. At ten all assembled and went to church for the litany, which, by a special permission, was said every day. At eleven, after the hourly recital of the Harmony and a hymn, dinner was served, during which passages from books of history and travel were read by the younger members in their turn. After dinner all had liberty until one o'clock, when the boys returned to school. A second service was held in the church; then, at five, there was supper in the parlour, with reading. This done, each was left to his own work or pleasure until, at eight, the bell rang to prayers for bedtime.

On the suggestion of George Herbert "watchings" were added to the religious offices of the family. By twos in their turn, the men at one end of the house, the women at the other, from nine at night until one in the morning they repeated on their knees all the Psalms, each taking a verse alternately. After these exercises they "went not to their naked beds at all, but lay down upon them till six o'clock, and then rose. Then they knocked at the door of Nicholas Ferrar, bidding him good-morrow. Ferrar himself watched twice a week at first, later three times,

accompanied one night by his nephew Nicholas, but on the other nights he watched alone.

Much might be added to the foregoing, but it perhaps will be sufficient for an impression of the life at Little Gidding. If not, what better can I do than refer to that delightful sketch which Shorthouse has incorporated in "John Inglesant." As the fame of the place went forth it attracted many visitors, not a few with that curiosity which is critical in the baser manner; but scarcely any would seem to have returned without sincere appreciation of all they saw. The misrepresentations of the community and the charges levelled against it, both during and after the lifetime of Nicholas Ferrar, notably in a tract entitled "The Armenian Nunnery," were largely those of persons who had no acquaintance with it, such as could suppose anti-Christ in every religious practice which was not their own. But there was nothing in the discipline, the doctrine, or the usages of the place that could be taken as having the remotest connection with Roman Catholicism; and Ferrar's declaration, on being questioned what he would do if the Mass were celebrated in his house, that he would pull the building down and erect another, is itself an emphatic answer to every suspicion and slander. So free was he from the spirit of proselytising, from anything that in a sinister sense could be considered Jesuitical, that while he taught the children of the district in their Psalms, he refused the request of their parents to catechise them; such training, he maintained, should be only by their proper minister or the parents themselves. It is pitiful that a community which existed unostentatiously as a centre of piety, learning and philanthropy should have been regarded by over-zealous Puritans as little better than a secret society for the insidious introduction of an unpopular faith. But while Puritanism

had its grand passion it had also its incapacities, one of which was that want of imagination and insight into the practices and motives of others which in many quarters even to-day is the prime factor in religious intolerance.

It is pleasant to turn to the other side, to think of friendly spirits who from far and near came to join the family group for a season, returning in their own ways to bear henceforward the gracious influence of the place. Chief among them was Crashaw, who here caught that spiritual life which breathes in his chief poems, not a little thing for one so truly inspired by the Muses to receive. We owe it more to Ferrar than to any other that Crashaw is in our estimation one of the finest and surest powers in our literature. George Herbert does not appear to have visited Little Gidding more than twice, yet he was Ferrar's closest friend, perhaps his brother, as their letters persuade us; many plans they wrought out in common, both religious and literary. And here I must lay before Ferrar one of his greatest praises, that we owe "The Temple" to him, and not only that but probably much that was of greatest grace in Herbert's personality; again, indirectly, much of the work of Vaughan, and so, in these and others, a specific contribution to our literature which is one of the great ornaments of the seventeenth century.

Ferrar died on December 4th, 1637.

This paper has run thus in its length over matters of biography, over which in reality I have been least studious, but by their human interest most enamoured. With great brevity must I tell of Ferrar's literary work, which, I judge, must have been considerable.

Little Gidding was sacked by the Parliamentary soldiers after the visit of Charles in 1646, nine years after the death of Ferrar. Pickard writes: "These military zealots, in the rage of what they called reformation,

ransacked both the church and the house. In doing which they expressed a particular spite against the organ. This they broke in pieces, of which they made a large fire, and thereat roasted several of Mr. (John) Ferrar's sheep, which they had killed in his grounds. This done, they seized all the plate, furniture, and provision which they could conveniently carry away. And in this general devastation perished those works of Mr. Nicholas Ferrar which merited a better fate."

What were these? First, I imagine there was the diary which he kept on his Continental travels. Secondly, there was a vast amount of writing which he did after the death of his mother in 1634. This must have been his more original work, and our want of it, in consideration of what from his pen has come to us, represents a serious loss. One may surmise, from this other work and our knowledge of his life at the time, that it was of a devotional character; I imagine it was of the nature of meditations similar to the "Considerations" of Valdés which he translated.

We are left with (1) the Translations; (2) the Story Books; and (3) the Harmonies.

1. Translations. The translations were the only works of Ferrar intended for the press: the rest were undertaken simply for use in the family.

(a) "On the Instruction of Children in the Christian Doctrine," by Ludovico Carbone. This was "well approved" by Herbert; but the Cambridge authorities refused to license it, a circumstance which called from Barnabas Oley the indignant remark that they "would not suffer that Egyptian jewel to be published."

(b) "The Temperate Man" bears on its preface the date December 7th, 1633. It consists of three treatises "on the right way of preserving life and health, together with soundness of the senses, judgment, and memory

with extream old age." The first of these is Ferrar's translation of "Hygieasticon," a work published in 1613 by Leonard Lessius, a Jesuit of Louvain; the other two are translations by Herbert from the Italian of Ludovico Cornaro and another author unnamed but now known to be Ortensio Lando. Prefixed are complimentary verses, by Oley, Peter Gunning, and Crashaw.

(c) Ferrar translated from the Spanish the *Life of Thomas Sanquay of Cordova*, "a gentleman of birth," says Pickard, "and very learned in law and divinity, one who led a very holy and strict life." This translation was never published.

(d) More important than these is the translation of the "One Hundred and Ten Considerations" of Juan de Valdés. This work was first written in Spanish, first printed in an Italian translation at Basle in 1550, and followed by French and Dutch editions. Ferrar used the Italian copy, and his translation was published at Oxford in 1638, the year after his death. It had probably remained in MS. a considerable time, if one may judge by the correspondence relating to it which passed between Herbert and Ferrar. There is a preface by Herbert who, the more critical theologian of the two, in notes of some interest also partly details his objection to not a few of the reflections of the book. Valdés has been called a Protestant, but as a matter of fact was a Catholic of no little ecclesiastical importance in his time. It is thought that these "Considerations" were the result of conferences with his friends, as they discussed in a free manner Sunday by Sunday selected passages of scripture at his private house on the bay of Naples. Herbert's objections are very precise, but they strike me simply as the criticisms of one who takes the Bible as the prime authority of his faith on the specula-

tions of another who by the acceptance of the Church as his authority reserves to himself the right of the broad interpretation and free discussion of Scripture. I take an illuminating note from a recent edition of this translation. "The most noticeable feature of the book is the entire omission of sacramental teaching. The creature and the Creator are to be placed in communion by means of an act of introspection, and entirely independent of any ecclesiastical ordinance. What is probable is that Valdés and his disciples regarded the sacramental system as so much a matter of course that there was no need for expository teaching on that heading. The meditations and commentaries were regarded as so many supplementary aids to spiritual growth, not as substitutes for existing ones." I think this note explains what was perhaps an oversight on the part of Herbert, and partly enables us to understand the attraction which the book had for Ferrar. His translation is very readable, perhaps, however, a little too involved in its sentences, but certainly very graceful in its English, as well as very simple. It is a little surprising that this book has not attained unto a higher place in common devotional literature.

2. The Story Books of Little Gidding consist of five folio volumes, mostly in Ferrar's own exquisite handwriting. They date from the year 1631, and were preserved for over 200 years by descendants of the family. Two are still thus possessed by Lady Lyell; the other three found their way into the British Museum. The first volume of the latter and part of one volume of the former were printed in 1899; and the hope was then entertained of the publication of the remainder. They are the "compilation of divine interludes, dialogues, and discourses in the Platonic way, planned by him for the purpose of warning his family from the Christmas games

and milder sports, which could hardly subsist without riot and extravagant license." Mrs. Ferrar formed various members of the family into what was designated "The Little Academy," and each represented in different combinations or classes an office or a virtue. Thus in the First Combination, the persons of which were subordinate to the heads of the community, Mary Collett was "The Chiefe," Anna "The Patient," Margaret "The Cheerful," and Elizabeth "The Affectionate." Each actor copied a story from the transcription of Ferrar, a story from political or ecclesiastical history illustrative of Christian qualities and recited it from memory, or, in the case of the younger members, read it. The books, as we have them, relate these stories together with the discussions that followed, and are perhaps the best evidence we have of the intimate home-life of the Ferrars. They reveal it on its most human side. I cannot say that as literature they exhibit much of what one would call style; they are not absorbing reading, but this is to be said: the stories themselves definitely exemplify the subjects chosen for the various days of festival; the dialogue, often tedious, is really argumentative, sometimes facetious, and generally exhortative in a gracious manner, while here and there are sudden flashes of a worldly wisdom one hardly expected. Thus, for the last remark, note this reflection: "Bee the witt never so good, the Instruments never so apt, the Advantage never so great for learning and performance of any skill, and yet give me an impatient-minded man that cannot hold him close and constant to the Business, and you shall find him upon the Test but shallow in what he understands and a slubberer in what he doth." I may quote one of the shorter stories as a specimen:—"Macarius, travailing to Mount Nitra upon some occasion, sent his Disciple before him, a young man and

highly conceited, rather for the fame of his Master's worth than his own vertue. This disciple, meeting one of the idolatrous Preists running in great hast with a heavy piece of timber on his shoulders, scornefully demands where away runs this Bedlam? The Preiste, flinging down his Burthen, fell upon him, and when he had beaten him almost to Death, taking up again the Timber, prosecuted his journey till he met with Macarius, who being farre of another Temper, with great Affability saluted the Preist. Hee, wondering thereat, asked Macarius when this Curtesy proceeded. 'Alas,' sayd Macarius, 'perceiving thee over-toyled I cannot but pittie thee, and therefore was willing by a gentle greeting to give opportunity of breathing, ready likewise to afford the help, if in any thing I may steed thee, either for the ease of thy labours or for the mollifying of those other discontents which is evident by your face do vex thee.' 'It had been happy for him whom I mett last,' sayd the Preist, 'if he had learned so good language as thou now usest.' 'Oh, me,' sayd Macarius, 'hast thou perhaps done him any hurt? Sure it was my disciple.' 'I, so I guesse' (sayd the Preist) 'by the conformity of your habitts. But however you are like, yet assuredly your hearts are farre unlike. He reviled mee without cause, and I have left him sore wounded in my rage. But by thy meekness and Love I am so farre convinced that I purpose from henceforth to bee of thy religion, which must undoubtedly be the best, that hath made thee so full of true goodnesse.' Having spoken this Macarius with teares embraced and baptized him, having first given order for the Care of his Disciple, whom and all others he was wont by his example to admonish to the Practize of kindnes, willing them to observe for certaine truth that proud and evill words make even good folks the worse; but sweet and humble speech induceth them that doe amisse the rather to Amendment."

3. The most interesting—it may also be regarded as the most original—work of Ferrar was the Harmony or Concordance of the Four Evangelists. I cannot do better, in offering a description of it, than quote its title page. “The actions, doctrines, and other passages touching our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, as they are related by the Four Evangelists, reduced into one complete body of history; wherein that which is severally related by them, is digested into order, and that which is jointly related by all, or any of them, is first expressed in their words by way of comparison; secondly, brought into one narration, by way of composition; thirdly, extracted into one clear context, by way of collection: yet so as whatsoever was omitted in the context, is inserted by way of supplement in another print, and in such a manner as all the four Evangelists may easily be read severally and distinctly, each apart and alone, from first to last. Done at Little Gidding, anno 1630.” In a word, this Harmony is so constructed that by following the simple directions it is possible to read either the connected narratives of the four Gospels or each one separately. The general arrangement is according to subject, as, for example, under the heading “Christ’s second going about Galilee and sending his Apostles.” The words of each several Gospel are indicated in the margin by a distinguishing letter. The ordinary type used is the Roman, but where two or more Gospels have identical language the words are repeated, but in Old English lettering. By means of this arrangement one can see at a glance a perfect collation of the Evangelists. The method in itself was simple: the cutting of the various passages from Bibles and pasting them together in this connection; but frequently it involved the transference of single words. The labour expended must have been enormous. And so carefully

were the pieces placed together that to any but the closest observation the full pages appear to be unbroken, as though the sheets had issued directly from the printing press. In illustration of the narrative were inserted the engravings Ferrar collected chiefly on his continental journeys.

The multiplication of the Harmony was due to Charles I., who, hearing of its compilation, desired and practically demanded a copy for himself, and, further, that Ferrar should in the same manner treat the Books of the Kings and the Chronicles—for poor Charles could not reconcile many of the passages of these histories. Ferrar himself did not produce more; but after his death, largely, it would seem, by reason of royal commands, Nicholas, his nephew, a prodigy of learning, issued harmonies and editions of the Gospels which are truly amazing. Not twenty-one years of age, he worked out a concordance in twenty-four languages, and contemplated one of not less than fifty. Among other feats—and this was to leave no doubt in the minds of persons sceptical of his linguistic ability—he translated each of the chapters of the Fourth Gospel into a separate language.

It goes beyond our immediate subject, but it must be noted that eleven concordances were compiled at Little Gidding. It is probable that of several of these there were duplicates. These various volumes were most sumptuously bound and decorated.

The purely literary part of this paper is entirely incommensurate with the importance of the subjects it has treated. That is due to the fact that it is easier to get away from books than from men. You will judge that while I have been studying or overlooking much of his work, I have been attracted, drawn aside by the personality of Ferrar and the story of the life at Little Gidding. That is true; and perhaps it has been due to this that

while his literary work has not received the attention it merits—yet would I not exaggerate—the narrative of his life engages more readers to day, and I have been conscious of the circumstance, and anxious through my own affection to enlarge it. Had Ferrar been no more than the friend, the brother of George Herbert, he had commanded our esteem; nor more than an inspiration to Crashaw, we had respected him: he was this, and more, as sincere a man as ever made in books a record of his mind, as sweet a soul as ever prayed to God.

THE FORGET-ME-NOT.

I CRAVE of fate nor wealth nor power
To gild my earthly lot,
I covet no enduring name,
I seek not any world-prized fame,
I ask but, that, a simple flower—
A blue Forget-me-not—
I gave away one summer day
To one from whom I parted,
With thoughts of me should cherished be
Close-bosomed and nigh-hearted.

The weary world may grow more cold,
And wane its every pleasure,
But what of them if but my gem
Be reckon'd her best treasure?
Ah, fate-fraught flower, Forget-me-not,
Dear talisman. Love's gains I wot
Are won or lost, or straight or crost—
Nay, life itself's a blank or prize
As she may lift upon my gift
Disdainful or love-lighted eyes.

W. V. BURGESS.



MANCHESTER UNDER THE COURT LEET.

By T. SWINDELLS.

OUR system of local government is the result of a long course of evolution. Under the Saxons there existed the Witena-gèmot or general council of the King and people, the Shire-gèmot a court held in each county twice a year, in Spring and Autumn, and a subordinate court held monthly to determine causes left undetermined by the Shire-gèmot. This last-named was afterwards divided into two, one having jurisdiction in criminal cases and known as the Tourn (circuit) court, from the Sheriff's going circuit through the country; the other, having jurisdiction in civil matters, being called the County Court. The next change was the formation of the Burg-gèmot or Forc-gèmot, a monthly court, presided over by the town-burgh or port reeve, having jurisdiction within the town, burgh or port. The word leet does not appear, but many philologists are of opinion that it had a Saxon origin. The Saxons in any case were believers in the principle of local self-government, that each burgess was held in surety for his own good behaviour, and that each should take his share in the maintainance of order and the punishment of offenders. With certain modifications and extensions the system was adopted by the Normans, the whole being confirmed in 1215 by Magna Carta. Included in the provisions of the Charter are those declaring that "all cities

and boroughs, and towns and ports, shall have all their liberties and free customs;" that "certain writs shall not deprive free men of their right to the local jurisdiction of the Courts Leet and Baron;" that "no freeman should be seized, imprisoned, outlawed or banished, or anyways destroyed, unless by the lawful judgment of his peers, or by the law of the land;" and that to no man should justice or right be sold, denied or delayed. The sheriff's Tourn or county court for criminal matters continued to be held, the Courts Leet being formed in centres of population in order that the populace should have justice done them at their own doors. Thus the right of holding such a court was often granted to a lord of the manor, who not only obtained thereby judicial authority and dignity, but also pecuniary gains from certain fees and fines imposed by the court. At the same time the Court Baron was called into being. These courts had separate powers and jurisdiction. The Court Leet took cognizance of felonies and misdemeanours, offences and nuisances generally, the Court Baron was concerned in suit and service, in trespass and offences by tenants, and in all matter relating to the rights and privileges of the lord of the manor. It is therefore not a matter of surprise that Thomas Grelle, seeing the benefits derived by all concerned under the charter conferred upon the people of Salford in 1230, granted to the people of the manor of Manchester the charter dated 1301. Under the charter the local court leet would be called into existence, and by it Manchester was largely governed until its incorporation.

The court met twice a year and all burgesses were compelled to attend, notice of the holding of the court having been given by the steward who presided over the court, six days earlier. The steward was appointed by the lord of the manor, and at the meeting of the court he gave

instructions to the lord's bailiff to swear in a jury of twenty-four, selected from the burgesses. The first meeting of the court of which we have any record was held in October, 1552, when Thomas West was Lord of the Manor. He appointed Edward, third earl of Derby, to act as steward. The Manchester of those days was a small place in comparison with the vast city of to-day. It consisted of a few houses clustered around the Market Place and the Churchyard, together with isolated buildings scattered along Long Millgate, Marketstead Lane, and Deansgate. Standing in the midst of gardens, orchards, and fields, were the houses of the gentry which included Radcliffe Hall in Pool Fold, Mr. Lever's house at the top of Marketstead Lane, Withengreave Hall, Knolls House near Walker's Croft, and Strangeways Hall, whilst further away in the country were the ancient halls of Ancoats, Garratt, Trafford, Hulme and Clayton.

By examining into the powers and duties of the court we shall get many glimpses of the social life of the little community of those early days.

The court having been duly opened and the bailiff having cried "Oyez" three times, the court leet being a court of the King, that official declared that "all manner of persons which are resiants or dozoners and owe suit royal to this Court Leet or Law Day, come in and do your suit, and answer to your names, as you shall be called, every man at the first call, upon pain and peril that shall fall thereon." This having been done and excuses for absence having been heard, those having complaints to enter were called upon to enter them; after which the jury was sworn and duly charged. The charge which need not be given here was a queerly-worded exhortation reminding the members of the jury how God had given the law to Moses on Mount Sinai, and calling upon them to hear the

cases brought before them dispassionately and fully. Cases were divided into two classes. The first comprised murder, rape, poaching, wounding, felony, unlawful assemblies and witchcraft. In all such cases inquiry was made and the offenders remitted to the justices of the shire for further trial.

The court, however, had full jurisdiction in all cases of disorderly conduct, and were to see that all thieves and robbers were duly pursued and brought to justice. Rogues, vagabonds, and sturdy beggars were severely dealt with, and a fine of ten shillings was imposed upon any person who gave alms to any such who might ask for assistance. The constables were to punish all sturdy beggars, and if any constable failed to do so he was fined 20s. Rogues were described as all idle persons who went about begging, and the list of such offenders included common players of interludes (the shows and circuses of modern fairs would be included), minstrels, sailors and soldiers; and the punishment meted out was exposure in the stocks, a pair of which were directed by statute to be erected in each tything. The maintainance of artillery, as the practice of archery was called, demanded attention. Archery butts were provided in Garratt Lane, in Alport Lane, and on the common land at Collyhurst. The law directed that every manchild from seven years old to seventeen should have a bow and two arrows, and every man from seventeen to three score a bow and four arrows. The penalty for default was 6s. 8d., and parents were directed to provide them for their children, and masters for their servants, under a similar penalty. Gaming with cards, dice, quoits, or bowls in connection with all houses was vigorously prohibited. At the same time such games were generally prohibited, except that persons whose income exceeded £100 were allowed to play them in their own houses or orchards where

other persons should not be able to see them; and that at Christmastime all men might play. The possession of a good income also entitled the person to shoot with hand guns or cross bows, a privilege which was refused to all others. The preservation of game was secured by the persons thus favoured being debarred from shooting any pheasant, partridge, heron, duck, and certain other varieties of bird under a penalty of £10 for each shot.

The duties of a highways' committee were also a portion of the duties of the court who duly appointed certain officials to see that the work was carried out. These persons were to see that six days of eight hours each were devoted to the repair and maintainance of the roads in each year. The work was done by the householders, each of whom must either work himself or send a deputy, and those who owned a cart were compelled to lend it together with two men. The state of the streets often demanded the attention of the court, and from time to time we read of householders digging clay or daub from the roadway for the repair of their houses, and in other ways rendering the thoroughfares unsafe for traffic. The building of boundary walls in such a way as to encroach upon the street, the removal of boundary stones or marks, and the stopping of footpaths also frequently occupied the attention of the court.

Very quaint was the instruction given to the court respecting burglars and poachers. It ran thus: "Also you shall inquire of sleepers by day and walkers by night to steal and purloin other men's goods, and coneys out of warrens, fish out of men's several ponds or waters, hens from henroosts, or any other thing whatsoever, for they are ill members in a common wealth and deserve punishment; therefore if you know any such present them." The duties of the court were far reaching, and revealed every

phase of the social life of the little community. Thus we find that they were empowered to investigate all cases of eaves dropping and slander reported to them. "You shall inquire of eaves-droppers, and such as by night stand or lie hearkening under walls or windows of other men, to hear what is said in any other man's house, to the end to set debate and dissension between neighbours, which is a very ill office; therefore, if you know any such, present them." The record of the proceedings on October 24, 1572, contains this entry: "The jury doth present John Skillieborn, plumber, to be a common eaves-dropper, a naughty person, such a one as doth abound in all disorders; therefore we desire that he may be avoided the town, and have such punishment as unto such doth appertain." The regulations bearing upon trade were in many respects interesting, and show that in those days the purchaser was protected against fraud on the part of the vendor, and that unfair competition between tradesmen was prohibited. There were regulations against forestallers, regrators and ingrossers, and special officials were appointed to see that those regulations were duly observed. As the words quoted have passed out of use, a few words of explanation will be necessary. A forestaller was one who either by intercepting corn, cattle, or merchandise before its arrival at the market or fair and purchasing it, or by any means deterred the due delivery of such merchandise at the market or fairs, did by such or any other means cause the price of similar articles to be raised by reason of apparent scarcity. Cornering the market was prohibited. A regrator was one who purchased wares or victuals at a market, and offered the same for sale in the same market or anywhere within a radius of four miles; and an ingrosser was one who should visit farms and houses with the object of purchasing growing corn, fruit or vegetables, or

butter or cheese, or fish or poultry, that otherwise would be sent to market, and offering the same for sale himself. The middleman or merchant was therefore the object of special attention on the part of the court, who imposed heavy penalties on offenders. In many cases the punishment for the first offence was forfeiture of the articles purchased; for the second offence, exposure in the pillory which stood in the market place; for the third, imprisonment and fine; and for the fourth banishment from the town; but in other cases the penalties were even more drastic. For the first offence it was forfeiture of the goods and two months imprisonment; for the second forfeiture of double value of the goods and six months' imprisonment; and for the third exposure in the pillory, the loss of all goods and chattels, and imprisonment during the King's pleasure. Cattle could not be resold within five weeks of purchase. Butchers were not allowed to sell any meat other than that was good and wholesome, and at only reasonable prices and profit. Bakers were another class of tradesmen who received much attention from the court. At first bread-baking was only allowed at the ovens owned by the lord of the manor, but gradually the custom fell into disuse. Then it was that the court was required to be vigilant in seeing that its orders were obeyed. Several varieties of bread were in general use, but in every case the size of the loaves was to be in accordance with the court's order. Thus at one time the penny white loaf weighed eight ounces, and the penny brown loaf fourteen ounces; and in all cases none but wholesome flour was allowed to be used. In order that possible infringements of the court's instruction should be guarded against, every baker was required to place his own distinctive mark on each loaf. The making of fancy bread and confectionery was prohibited, and heavy penalties were imposed on all

bakers who used butter, lard or cream in the making of bread. These matters appear to have occupied the attention of the court on many occasions, and infringements of the orders must have been of frequent occurrence. The penalties imposed were forfeiture of goods and fines, but the fourth offence was punished by exposure in the pillory. There was even in those days a drink question, and one phase or another of it occupied the attention of the court on very many occasions. In 1560 the court decided "that no person within the town shall brew to sell unless they be able to make two honest beds, and everyone of them shall put forth of his window, or some other convenient place, the sign of a hand painted, afore the feast of St. Martin." This referred to the smaller alehouses, the larger ones or inns being provided with four beds. The sign of the hand was evidently intended to denote that at the time of exhibition that ale was actually on sale, for the following year the matter was again before the jury, and a decision is recorded that the hand shall be exposed when a barrel was on tap, but that when "they have none ale to sell they must take in the hand." It was further decided to impose a penalty in cases where innkeepers having ale for sale, refused to supply any person. Twenty years later a record was entered which reads curiously in our days: "That it is ordained by the steward and jury that the jury being assisted by the deputy steward and constables of the town, shall search all inns and alehouses, and make certificate unto the said steward what beddings they and everyone of them have; and this is to be done sometime before the end of next week; and also to view what rooms and stablings they have; and also to enquire what unlawful games they have used in their houses, and whether they have kept the assize of ale, and by what measures they sell." The price of ale was to be fourpence per gallon if consumed off the

premises and sixpence within the house. One instruction was that no person must sit in an alehouse for more than an hour at a time; and another was to the effect that "no man's children or servants shall go abroad in the street nor come into any alehouse having no lawful business, after eight o'clock in the winter and after nine o'clock in summer. And if any innkeeper shall hereafter sell any meat or ale to any servants or children after these hours, he or they shall forfeit 2s." Not only was early closing recognised, but Sunday closing and the *bona fidé* traveller were equally familiar to our forefathers. In 1573 it was enacted that no drink nor victuals were to be sold at any time during prayer, preaching, or other divine service, unless it be to passengers. Ancient custom is responsible for the neighbourly relationship of church and "pub." In those days parishes were scattered and the occasion of christenings, weddings and funerals, usually brought together many friends who travelled long distances. It was therefore convenient to all concerned that the feasts usually provided on such occasions should be provided near the church. The Blackamoor's Head and the Ring o'Bells standing on the river bank, the Three Tuns in the Applemarket, and other inns in Long Millgate and thereabout, did a great trade with the visitors. The court leet, however, stopped and prevented anything like extortion by the innkeeper by deciding in 1652 that in future no person dwelling within the parish shall pay at any wedding dinner above fourpence. In those days the guests paid their own shot, and so long as the limit was fixed at this figure there was little fear of extravagant charges being made. The court did not stipulate the number of courses to be provided, they simply said that the maximum charge should be fourpence. In spite of the penalties imposed in cases of infringement, higher charges appear to have become somewhat general,

and in 1567 and 1572 Lord Derby wrote from New Park, Aldfort, and Lathom, to the court on the subject, and urged that the penalties incurred in all such cases should be demanded and recovered. Closely connected with the wedding dinner were the waits. We have seen that travelling musicians were not allowed to play in the streets. The waits were on the other hand appointed by the court leet, and we have a number of references to them in the records. In 1562 the jury ordered that "Richard Kyrshawe from henceforth shall exercise the office of the common wayte of the town, and so to continue from time to time doing his duty, and using himself honestly as an honest man ought to do, or else another to be put in his place." Five years later Randill Lighe and Richard Wirrall were appointed and were instructed to play together; and in 1569 Randill Lighe and five other players were selected. How this municipal band performed their duties we are not told; but in 1588 their number was reduced to four, and these do not seem to have been well paid. It was a matter of complaint that strange pipers and other minstrels sometimes played before wedding parties going to church and at wedding dinners. This was to be stopped and innkeepers and others were enjoined not to allow any musicians other than the town waits to play at wedding dinners. At the time of the revolution the waits were abolished, and the burgesses ceased to hear the performances they had given each evening during suitable weather in the market place and other parts of the town. We have referred to many of the features of the innkeeper's calling of the closing decades of the sixteenth century, and will suitably close the section by noting the punishments dealt out to those who drank not wisely but too well. In the first place any person found drunk in any alehouse in the town or else seen abroad in the street

should be imprisoned in the dungeon all night. The dungeon was the disused chapel that formerly stood on old Salford bridge, which consisted of two rooms, one being on a level with the roadway and the other below it. Prisoners were placed in the lower room for greater security, and as the place was overrun with rats the lot of the unfortunate prisoner was not a desirable one, more than one case being on record wherein prisoners had the flesh eaten off their feet by the vermin. Another terror was the possibility of drowning, for in cases of heavy rain the river rose rapidly and gradually filled the room. More than one prisoner was found to be dead, either drowned or frightened to death, when the prison was opened in the morning. If, however, the individual survived, he was fined sixpence, "and if the person be so poor that he cannot pay the same, then the good man or good wife of the house where he continued drinking shall pay the fine." This latter practice might perhaps be re-introduced with advantage in our days. The punishment meted out to any alehouse keeper, man or woman, who was drunk in their own house or elsewhere, was imprisonment for one night and to be henceforth discharged from alehouse keeping. The alehouse keeper was also liable to a penalty if he measured his ale in other than standard measures, and could be fined 20s. for "every pot they sell that is not a full quart." It is worthy of note that not only was purity of food sold insisted upon by our ancient court leet, but that a number of standard weights and measures were kept, and that it was compulsory for all tradesmen to see that their weights and measures were in accord with the standard weights. All such were directed periodically to test their weights and measures, and for the purpose those belonging to the town were at all times available. In 1562 the court ordered that "only one measure shall be made for all manner corns and

grains, except meal or malt, which measure to be marked;" and in 1586 the wife of Ellis Slater was amerced in 12d. for she hath kept an unlawful peck. The standard weights were of brass and were sealed with the town seal; and were from time to time renewed. In 1593 the court bought a 28lb., 14lb., 4lb., 2lb., 1lb., $\frac{1}{2}$ lb., $\frac{1}{4}$ lb., 2oz., 1oz., $\frac{1}{2}$ oz., $\frac{1}{4}$ oz., 2 and $\frac{1}{2}$ quarter oz., which together with an iron beam, with scales of board, with cords, cost £2. 13s. 9d.

Leaving commercial affairs we note the various enactments of the court respecting dogs. No man, unless he held land valued at 40s. a year, was allowed to keep a greyhound or other hunting dog. In the case of parsons the limit was the receiving of "£10 a year of spiritual promotion." The penalty for infringements was a year's imprisonment. Other breeds of dogs could be kept by burgesses, but in 1562 an order was given that all mastiffs and great dane dogs were to be muzzled when in the streets. The dane dogs were used for purpose of bear and bull-baiting, and were the progenitors of our modern bull-dogs. The order referred to was frequently renewed, but it would appear that it was disregarded on many occasions; and in October, 1590, several dogs had lively experiences. An account of their achievements appears in the records for that year. We read that "very lately in the Deans Gate, a cow had very likely been spoiled by a mastiff, as also that one, Edward Blomeley, in parting of a brawl or fray in the same street hardly escaped unspoiled, and that this present 1st October the foreman of the jury had likely to have been overthrown by a great mastiff dog, supposed to belong to one John Cowper Smith, being unmuzzled and going loose in the street."

In the streets of the old town not only were inconvenience and danger produced by the presence of unmuzzled mastiffs, but annoyance was often produced by

the perambulations of swine. Many of the townspeople had pigstyes connected with their hoardings, and it was nothing unusual to meet pigs in the market place and even in the churchyard. Much of the court's time was occupied in discussing various phases of the pig question. An attempt was made to organise the porkers, and a town swineherd was duly appointed. The court ordered that the swineherd should pass through the streets blowing his horn at intervals, between the hours of eight and nine each morning. The burgesses were to turn their swine out, and thus collecting his charge the swineherd drove them to the common lands at Collyhurst by way of Ashley Lane. Returning in the evening he left the pigs with their owners. For this service he was paid, also by order of the court, the sum of fourpence per year payable in quarterly instalments by the owners for each pig committed to his charge. One entry under date October, 1587, reminds us of the state of affairs in many Irish cabins. "Whereas divers neighbours do find themselves aggrieved that the wife of Edward Burroes doth keep swine within her house, to the great annoyance not only of the neighbours, but also of the passengers by her house, and to the great danger of infection to the whole town, which God defend. She was ordered to discontinue the practice on a penalty of ten shillings. Still one more quotation to give us another glimpse of the old town. In 1593 it was ordered that "John Shacklocke nor any other person within the town shall hereafter set up any swine troughs or other vessels to feed swine in the open streets to the annoyance of neighbours and other passengers, but shall remove the same before the 1st of November.

Another practice which did not tend to improve the streets was the getting of clay or daub as it was called. In the days when half-timbered houses were

built there was a great demand for clay, which was used to cover the osiers that were interwoven between the beams and uprights which formed the framework of the buildings. Much of the clay was obtained from pits on the outskirts of the town, notably in Shudehill, where Swan Street now stands, and in Piccadilly, where the Infirmary esplanade now is, where the ponds were known as the daub holes. We can understand that when the streets were in many cases formed by the natural earth only, many householders requiring daub for repairing purposes would not hesitate to use that that lay in the street near their own door. This did not tend to the improvement of the streets, and the court were frequently called upon to act in the matter. The market place, as the most frequented place in the town, was constantly receiving attention. At one time horses were ordered not to be foddered in the Market Place by persons doing business there, but were to be taken to stables for the purpose; at another orders were given as to the positions in the Market Place to be occupied by different classes of tradesmen, and on another occasion persons were appointed to keep clean the thoroughfare, as complaints were made that such persons had neglected to perform their duties. In the market place were the cross, the stocks, the pillory and the conduit.

The last-named was of first importance to the inhabitants, and owed its origin to the generosity of one of the town's earliest worthies, Isabella Beck. As it formed the principal water supply for many generations, we can easily understand why the court devoted so much time to it. We find records of many orders to repair it, the one for September, 1581, being the most interesting. It declares: Whereas the conduit, a great ornament to the town, is greatly decayed, to the great discommodity of the town it is ordered that William Radclyffe (gent.), Robert Langley,

Nicholas Becke, Thomas Beck, John Radclyffe, George Pendleton, Henry Gee, and George Billinge, shall be overseers of the said conduit for the amendment of the same; and that either by benevolence of the well disposed inhabitants, or by calling the miselayers to them, shall assess such sums for the repairing of the same, as by their directions shall seem convenient. The importance of keeping the water free from contamination was recognised, and in 1572 it was stated "that, whereas the streets about the conduit be evil and unclean kept, and noisome to the passers by, we order that everyone that occupieth the houses and shops about the conduit shall keep the said streets clean, and sweep them from time to time." In 1585 it seems to have been the practice of certain persons to wash clothes, to dress calves' head, and to scour household vessels at the conduit, for the court appointed special officials to see that the practice was discontinued. We can sympathise with the court in its efforts to keep pure the town's water supply. Another feature of the supply was the necessity for economy on the part of the townspeople. To prevent waste it was decided in 1579 "that no person should take to the conduit any kind of vessel of greater capacity than one woman is able to bear full of water, and but one of every house at one time, and to have their cale as hath been accustomed: William Radclyffe, gentleman, only excepted." A few years later it was found necessary to curtail the supply of water by limiting it to certain hours. In the summer months water could be obtained six hours daily, and from September to March from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m., John Wilton keeping the keys. This limitation did not prove successful, and it became necessary to increase the supply by connecting other springs with the conduit.

Curious though it may appear to us, the court had much

to do with the apparel worn by the townfolk. In Henry VIII.'s time the law stated that only persons who possessed land valued at £100, or goods worth £200, should be allowed to wear garments made partially or entirely of silk or velvet. No one beneath the degree of an earl could wear sable, and only those owning land exceeding £40 in value could wear marten, squirrel, or fox fur. The wearing of gold ornaments was similarly limited; and all persons except the select few were compelled to wear flat, wollen caps on Sundays and holidays. Heavy penalties were inflicted in cases of non-observance, and it fell to the court leet to see that the law was obeyed within its jurisdiction. In Queen Elizabeth's time the fashion of wearing hats had come into vogue in spite of the law, and in 1565 an Act of Parliament was passed, the preamble of which declared that as a result the industry of making woollen caps was greatly impoverished. The act prohibited the making of any caps of any material but wool, and then declared that "no man under the degree of a knight or of a lord's son, should wear any cap of velvet or covered with velvet. This act also failed; and in 1570 another attempt was made; and the wearing of woollen caps by all except aristocrats was again insisted upon. A record of our court bears upon this matter, for the jury ordered in 1573 that "no person of what age, estate or degree soever he be shall from henceforth wear any hat upon dull days or holidays upon such pains and penalties as by the laws is provided.

Such were some of the duties and powers of the court leet. When we remember that the court only met twice a year we can understand how essential it was that officials should be appointed from time to time who should see that the orders of the court were duly observed. Some of these may be enumerated as they appear in the list for October, 1587. There were four market lookers for corn, whose

duty it was to examine all corn offered for sale in the market, and four lookers for fish and flesh offered in the market. The fish market in those days extended from the Market Place to Smithy Door, occupying the site of the present Old Shambles. There were two mise layers and two mise gatherers. The system on which the mise, lay or rate was levied, is referred to in a record for October, 1570. "Whereas divers sums of money is and hath been disbursed by the constables and others for the commonwealth of the town, as unto us and divers others of the town is known, in consideration whereof we order that a lay shall be laid and made of all the inhabitants within the said town, by the assessment of the mise layers and other persons whom they shall choose; and they, by their discretion to assess every man accordingly." Three sealers of leather were appointed, and nine lookers for white meats were allotted to various thoroughfares. Then there were two officers to examine bread offered for sale and two ale-tasters. We are not told whether there was any competition for the last-named appointment. Thirteen bylawmen were appointed for Market Stid Lane, Deansgate, St. Mary's Gate, both Market Stids, Withingreve, Hanging Ditch, Fenel Street, Milnegate, Tode Lane, and Hunt's Bank. The term byelaw is probably derived from burg-lagh, meaning boroughlaw; and the officers referred to were deputed to see that the general orders of the court were obeyed in their respective districts. The streets were cleansed by sixteen scavengers. Two officers for fruits were selected to examine all such offered for sale, to see that none were sold in the market before nine o'clock in the morning, and that no persons purchasing fruit offered the same for sale in the town on the day of purchase. Two prayzers or appraisers were deputed to value goods to be seized in cases of non-payment of rents. If they valued the goods too

high they were compelled to take them themselves at their own valuation, a somewhat curious condition. Two officers were entrusted with the keeping clean of the Market Stids, two were held responsible for the condition of the conduit, whilst another was entrusted with the key of the conduit, and locked and unlocked the door as directed by the court. Four affeerers were sworn in to whom was deputed the difficult question of assessing the fines to be inflicted by order of the court. In doing this they had to consider the nature of the offence, the attendant conditions, and the position of the offender; the idea being that harsh judgments should be minimised, and no man penalised to a greater extent than he was able to meet. The appointment probably originated with Magna Carta, wherein it was laid down that persons were to be amerced after the manner of their faults; and that the amercements should be assessed by the oath of honest and lawful men of the vicinage. It was deemed necessary in order to prevent persons from putting butter, suet, or cream in bread or cakes, that four inspectors should be appointed for the purpose. This referred only to bread baked for sale, but even in those cases the appointments were not altogether desirable ones for those appointed. We are not told that any money payments were made to the officers, the oath taken by all burgesses compelling them to take any office to which they might be appointed by the court. Order was maintained by the boroughreeve, who was anciently the lord's bailiff, and the constables who acted along with him. Under them was the catchpole, who as a paid official stood in the position of the present police constables. The catchpole, in 1555, was William Reade; in 1566, Richard Galley was appointed, and in the records can be traced the various changes made year by year. The swineherd has been previously mentioned, and also his duties and munificent rate

of payment. There was nearly a hundred officials appointed by the steward or the court leet, the duties of all being clearly defined.

In conclusion it will perhaps be interesting to note the words of some of the oaths administered on persons taking office. The constables were sworn in as follows:—"You and either of you shall swear that you well and truly shall serve the King's Majesty and the lord of the leet in the office of constableness, and as constables of the town for and during the space of one whole year next ensuing. You shall endeavour yourselves to the uttermost of your powers to see the King's Majesty's peace to be kept, and watch and ward observed and kept in this town, as hath been accustomed, and as it ought to be; likewise you shall endeavour yourselves to learn and understand the contents of the statute of Winchester, and divers other statutes of the realm, made for the punishment of rogues, vagabonds, and sturdy beggars haunting and resorting within the precinct of your office, and punish the offenders accordingly. You shall also have regard to the maintainance of artillery (archery) within your said office, and that you shall do and accomplish to the uttermost of your power."

The oath taken by the affeerors was "You and either of you shall swear by the contents of that holy book, that you shall truly and indifferently tax, assess and affeer all such amercements as are presented at this court, wherein you shall spare no man for love, favour, affection or corruption, nor raise or enhance upon any man, of malice, more grievous amercements than shall be thought reasonable, according to the quality of the offence, and the faults committed, and not otherwise."

One other oath should be read, that taken by the ale-taster. This is an official who has no representative to-day, unless we regard the public analyst as such, although it is

very doubtful whether that official applies the test of taste to the many of the samples he collects. In ancient times the ale taster would appear to have made regular visits to brewers and tiplers in order to duly test the quality of the liquor produced. The meaning of the word tipler should be given in order to prevent possible misunderstanding. A tipler was one who kept an alehouse for the sale of liquor not made on his own premises but purchased for purposes of sale. The oath taken by the ale-taster declared: "You shall swear that you shall well and truly serve the King's Majesty, and the lord of this leet, in the office of ale-taster or assiser of this liberty: for this year to come; you shall have diligent care, during the time of your being in office, to all the brewers and tiplers within your office, that they and everyone of them do make good and wholesome ale and beer for man's body, and that the same be not sold before it be assayed by you, and then to be sold according to the prices limited and appointed by the King's justices of the peace; and all faults committed or done by the brewers or tiplers, or by any of them, you shall make known, and present the same at this court, whereby due punishment may be inflicted upon them for their offences accordingly, and in every other thing you shall well and truly behave yourself, in the said office for this year to come." There are a number of interesting items contained in the records which are not included, in the items noted, but which shed side lights upon the social life of our forefathers. The mention of the ditch that ran down Market Street, the complaint that certain residents allowed their ducks and geese to stray into the Market Place, that middens and pig styes lay open in Market Stead Lane and in the Market Place, that all grain and corn was ground at the Grammar School Mills, that strangers were not allowed to stay in the town for more than two nights without notice

being given to the constables, that inhabitants were not allowed to shelter persons who were not "able to get their livings without begging," and that in 1587 the court ordered that on account of the state of the streets as a result of too much traffic, after November 20 next, no cart with shod wheels carrying muck, dung, daub, clay or corn, shall be allowed to enter the town under a penalty of two shillings, are examples of these. Sufficient has been said, however, to show how public affairs were managed three centuries ago, and to enable us to realise how very different life under the court leet was as compared with present-day conditions; and at the same time to see how the City Council with its powers and rights is the outcome of a long period of evolution.





CONGREVE AND HIS COMEDIES.

By J. J. RICHARDSON.

THE corrosive action of time and of change in thought and manners soon makes dull even the brightest of literary reputations, though, to some authors, there comes a compensation for this loss in the increased attractiveness of their personalities. As their books lose their interest and assume the dignified position of classics without which no gentleman's library is complete, but which few gentlemen ever read, the record of the sayings and doings of these writers acquires a growing charm for us. Who now reads anything that Johnson wrote? Yet how we love to dip into Boswell's life of him, and enjoy his rough common sense. Of what concern to us are Horace Walpole's or Fanny Burney's novels? though we delight in the gossiping letters and diaries. Does not Goldsmith owe the freshness of his fame rather to his chequered career and his lovable character than to his numerous and varied works?

With Congreve the reverse is the case. His comedies are as bright and readable now, perhaps, as when they were written two hundred years ago, but of the sayings of this wittiest of writers we know almost as little as "what song the Sirens sang;" and of his life the record is singularly incomplete. He comes down to us as one of

the least heroic and least picturesque figures in our literary annals, and were it not for his comedies his fame would have been writ in water. Since it has been engraved upon imperishable brass, let us glance briefly at what manner of man he was.

William Congreve came of an old Staffordshire family, which took its name from a village in the west portion of that county. He was born in the year 1670, at Bardsey, near Leeds. His father was an officer in the Army, who had command of a garrison in Ireland, and Congreve's youth was spent in that country. He showed himself to be a boy of uncommon parts, and at the age of fifteen proceeded to Trinity College, Dublin. His record there was a good one. He was an apt and industrious student, and laid the foundations of those scholarly attainments for which in after life he had a reputation. Among his college companions was one destined to be the greatest writer of the eighteenth century, Jonathan Swift. With him he always remained on most intimate terms, and it is from the "Journal to Stella" that we get most of our glimpses of Congreve in the later years of his life.

At the Revolution in 1688 Congreve's family seem to have found it either needful or politic to return to England, and for the next three years we lose sight of him. We find a record of his entrance at twenty-one years of age as a student of law in the Middle Temple. That he had any inclination towards such study we cannot think possible as we hear nothing of any progress in it; whilst we have evidence of a taste for literature and of an ambition to excel as a writer. He had already written a novel which was published soon after he reached London, and among the baggage which he brought with him from the country was the MS. of his first comedy, "The Old Bachelor."

We can easily imagine that, with such a bias towards letters, the study of the law would not offer any serious attractions to his mind, nor can we be surprised at finding him preferring the fascinations of the coffee-houses and playhouses to the dull routine of work in chambers. We must remember he was young and had an ample allowance. His family connections were good, he had a handsome face, an agreeable figure, and manners both easy and polished. He was by nature gay and witty, and his mind had been cultivated by wide reading and study of the classics. What better qualifications could he have had to ensure success among the wits and gallants who passed their lives and sought their pleasures amidst the gaiety and bustle of the Capital?

At this time John Dryden was at the zenith of his fame, and sat enthroned at Will's Coffee-house as the undisputed monarch of the world of letters. Dryden was over sixty years of age, and Congreve nearly forty years his junior, yet the latter seems to have found no difficulty in attracting the great man's attention and in securing the favour of his advice and assistance. To him Congreve showed the MS. of his comedy, and when Dryden had read it he declared that "he never saw such a first play in his life," and at once offered to correct and fit it for the stage. He did more than this, for he used his powerful influence to get it produced at Drury Lane Theatre. The leading actors and actresses of the period were cast for parts in "The Old Bachelor," and its representation was a signal success.

All thoughts of the law were abandoned, and Congreve set to work on another comedy. A year later "The Double Dealer" saw the light at the same theatre. This is undoubtedly a better written play than "The Old Bachelor," but its satire was too keen and cruel to hit the taste of the town, and the reception awarded it was

anything but favourable, though Dryden and others praised its literary merit. His next effort was "Love for Love," the most entertaining and amusing, if not the most brilliant, of his comedies. It was intended for the stage of Drury Lane, but the management of a new theatre which had been built in Lincoln's Inn Fields offered Congreve a share in their profits if he would allow them to produce the play, and also write exclusively for them in the future. To this he consented. "Love for Love" was received with delight by the public, and not only had a long run on the stage, but, in book form, rapidly passed through several editions.

Except for a tragedy, "The Mourning Bride," five years elapsed before Congreve produced another play, though he had promised the management of the Lincoln's Inn Theatre to write one every year, if his health permitted. It is now more than probable that his indulgence in the pleasures and dissipations that formed so great a part of the life of a man about town in his day, were injuring his excellent constitution, as well as consuming his time.

In March, 1700, appeared "The Way of the World," admittedly the finest product of his genius—a comedy compact with brilliant strokes of wit and delicate satire—a veritable feast of good things for the literary palate. But the audience that witnessed its production was not pleased. The comedy was a failure upon the stage, and in his annoyance Congreve declared he would not write again. In a young man to whom success had come so easily and so soon that, as Macaulay said, "no English writer except Lord Byron has, at so early an age, stood so high in the estimation of his contemporaries," there is nothing surprising that at the moment of his disappointment he should make so rash a vow. A much stranger thing is that he kept it. Although he lived for nearly

thirty years longer his literary career was practically finished.

Along with the fame which his comedies brought him there came still more solid advantages in the shape of well-paid Government appointments. He was made a Commissioner for licensing Hackney Coaches, he was given a place in the Pipe Office, also a post in the Custom House worth £600 a year, and afterwards made Secretary for Jamaica. In all he is reputed to have been receiving £1,200 a year. In matter-of-fact times like our own, when the portals of the Civil Service are guarded by competitive examinations there are no such pleasant oases amid the deserts of literature. No longer can kindly patrons and powerful noblemen hand over lucrative sinecures to literary celebrities, but as ample compensation nowadays writers of plays guiltless of any such splendid wit and literary style as characterise Congreve's works, receive royalties on their performances which make his £1,200 a year seem almost a paltry pittance.

Not much more need be said of Congreve's life. He never married, and no private scandal can be charged against him. He was on intimate terms with the celebrated actress, Mrs. Bracegirdle, who played the heroines of his comedies. Her beauty and charm were such that it was said one-half of her audience was in love with her, but so circumspect was her life that she was called the "Diana of the stage." If any doubt can be cast upon her reputation it is with regard to her friendship with Congreve.

In the letters and diaries of the early part of the eighteenth century we get occasional glimpses of Congreve's life. We see him passing some of his hours in the company of Swift, Pope, Bolingbroke, Addison, Steele, Gay and Prior, usually at taverns and coffee-houses,

and with the accompaniment of the bottle, that is such a feature of the life of the period. We learn of his becoming a martyr to gout, of his growing obesity, of his failing sight through cataract, but we never learn of him being other than an amiable well-bred gentleman, full of a gay humour and kindly temper; and one of whom no one has an ill word to say. Gay called him "an unrepachable man," and no record but shows his urbanity, his cheerfulness and his easy-going good-nature. For the ten years the well-known Kit-Cat Club existed he is reputed to have been its liveliest and wittiest member. Not a great figure truly, but almost a lovable one.

That he was honoured in his old age we know, for did not Pope dedicate to him his translation of the *Iliad*? And when death came to end his career his body was laid in state in the Jerusalem Chamber, and afterwards followed to its last resting-place in Westminster Abbey by the highest peers in the realm, and amid the pomp and circumstance of a great man's obsequies.

When we turn to consider the plays upon which rests Congreve's claim to rank as the wittiest writer of satirical comedy in our language—and of the sureness of this claim there can be no manner of doubt—we must not approach them in any narrow, censorious or puritanical spirit, for they contain much that is offensive to our sense of decorum and our liking for literary reticence. We cannot prevent a feeling of repugnance at the cynical display of a loose morality, nor help being shocked by frequent coarse expressions and indelicate allusions. But we must remember these plays were written at a time when the social life of the upper classes was perhaps more dissolute than at any period in our history, and that Congreve's purpose in writing was to satirise the follies, fashions, manners and morals of what, to use a current phrase, may be called the "smart set" of the society of his day.

Congreve's view of life is essentially a superficial one. He has no concern with the hard realities of existence. His aim is to amuse, as he himself said, by "painting the vices and follies of humanity." He does not see around him any social or moral problems for which he must needs offer some solution. He regards only the lighter side of the society amidst which it was his lot to mingle and his pleasure to satirise. This little world of Congreve's creation is not an attractive microcosm, and were we to take it too seriously it would spoil all possibilities of enjoyment, for, with few exceptions, such characters as he depicts would, if we met them in real life, fill us with contempt and disgust. Again, his picture of the social life has so many glaring inconsistencies that we must refuse to recognise it as having any relation to real life. Where in the world would you find vain, shallow and worthless people carrying on conversation full of a quintessence of fine talk, brimming over with brilliant wit and gay repartee? Where are the valets and maids who rival their masters and mistresses in their clever raillery? Why should married women be so squeamish about their honour and so ready in protestations of their innocence in a world where none of them are faithful to their marriage vows? Or why should husbands show such horror against cuckoldry where all have horns on their foreheads? In morals, as in other things, there can be no rules without exceptions to prove them.

Congreve's comedies cannot be regarded as real to life, not even to the life of his day. They are supremely artificial, and what response the appeal they make to a reader will receive depends upon his temperament. And as tastes and feelings differ so widely we must not be surprised if we meet with judgments that strike us as unexpected. Take two instances. Thackeray, in his

"Lectures on the English Humourists," attacks Congreve and his comedies on high moral grounds. He delivers himself in most brilliant and scathing style, and with evident animus against both. Yet Thackeray was no narrow-minded Puritan, but a man of the world, who in his youth had warmed both hands at the fire of life. Charles Lamb, than whom we have no purer or more moral spirit in our literature, not only enjoyed Congreve's writings, but said he felt "better always for the perusal of one of Congreve's comedies."

Need more be said upon this aspect of the plays. It is for us to take from them, as we do from life, what adds to our gaiety and pleasure, whilst ignoring what is repugnant to our tastes and habits. There are spots upon the sun, and some of them very large ones, the scientists tell us, yet we have much to be thankful for in the matter of light and heat.

Congreve's limitations, when compared with other writers of comedy, are an inability to devise a good plot, and a lack of humour in his characters. But when we consider the literary quality of his dialogue we recognise at once his supremacy. His wit is unsurpassable, nay unapproachable, and yet the conversation flows easily and naturally, passing from one unexpected simile to another, and always sparkling with gay jest and witty repartee. We forget his characters and his plots in our enjoyment of his unmatched style. The glittering splendour of it reminds us of a fine piece of diamond work so compact with jewels, so radiant in its brilliant beauty, that we do not see the metal that holds the gems together, nor think of the cunning of the artist who has designed and constructed it.

Of his characters only his heroines capture our regard. Grant that they are vain, pleasure-loving and at times,

alas! free in their conversation. But they mean no harm, they are full of high spirits, of good humour and a gaiety that makes us forget their deficiency of deeper qualities in our delight at their fascinating ways. Millimant in "The Way of the World" comes easily first. She is the queen of comic heroines, and, like many a charming woman, a born coquette. When she enters upon the scene it is, as her lover Mirabel says, "full sail with her fan spread and her streamers out, and a shoal of fools for tenders." He rallies her upon her charms, and contends that it is the lover's eye which bestows them—that beauty is the lover's gift. Hear her reply:—

MIL. O, the vanity of these men! . . . If they did not commend us, we were not handsome! Now you must know they could not commend one, if one was not handsome. Beauty the lover's gift!—Lord, what is a lover, that it can give? Why, one makes lovers as fast as one pleases, and they live as long as one pleases, and they die as soon as one pleases; and then, if one pleases, one makes more.

WIT. Very pretty. Why, you make no more of making lovers, madam, than of making so many card matches.

MIL. One no more owes one's beauty to a lover, than one's wit to an echo. They can but reflect what we look and say; vain empty things if we are silent or unseen, and want a being.

MIR. Yet to those two vain empty things you owe the greatest pleasures of your life.

MIL. How so?

MIR. To your lover you owe the pleasure of hearing yourselves praised; and to an echo the pleasure of hearing yourselves talk.

WIT. But I know a lady that loves talking so incessantly, she won't give an echo fair play; she has that everlasting rotation of tongue, that an echo must wait till she dies before it can catch her last words.

It is no easy matter to make extracts from Congreve's comedies; not from any trouble as to deciding where to begin, but from the difficulty of leaving off. Recall

Angelica's banter of her uncle in "Love for Love," or Valentine's amusing feigning of madness, or the still more comic scene between Miss Prue and Tattle. Take the fair Millamant's raillery of her rustic admirer Sir Wilful, or her laying down of the conditions upon which she will marry Mirabel, to instance only a few of the good things which crowd his scenes. They are delightful in their unflagging gaiety and lively spirit, in their easy flow of daring and brilliant wit, in their keen and delicate satire.

In the distribution of his favours Congreve is thoroughly democratic. He puts as much wit and good sense into the mouth of a valet as he does into that of his master. Valentine, in "Love for Love," having spent his patrimony in expensive living, and being dunned by importunate creditors, keeps to his lodgings, and seeks to amuse himself and stay his stomach by reading. To his man-servant Jeremy he says:—

You go to breakfast. There's a page doubled down in Epictetus that is a feast for an Emperor.

JER. Was Epictetus a real cook, or did he only write receipts.

VAL. Read, read, sirrah! and refine your appetite; learn to live upon instruction; feast your mind; and mortify your flesh; read and take nourishment at your eyes; shut up your mouth, and chew the end of understanding; so Epictetus advises.

JER. O, Lord! I have heard much of him when I waited upon a gentleman at Cambridge. Pray what was that Epictetus?

VAL. A very rich man—not worth a groat.

JER. Humph, and so he has made a very fine feast where there is nothing to be eaten.

VAL. Yes.

JER. Sir, you're a gentleman, and probably understand this fine feeding; but, if you please, I had rather be at board wages. Does your Epictetus, or your Seneca here, or any of those rich poor rogues, teach you how to pay your debts without money? Will Plato be bail for you? or Diogenes,

because he understands confinement and lived in a tub, go to prison for you?

VAL. Why, sirrah, I have no money, and you know it; and therefore resolve to rail at all that have; and in that I but follow the examples of the wisest and wittiest men in all ages; these poets and philosophers whom you naturally hate, for just such another reason, because they abound in sense, and you are a fool.

JER. Ay, sir, I am a fool, I know it; and yet, Heaven help me, I'm poor enough to be a wit. . . .

VAL. . . . And for the wits, I'm sure I am in a condition to be even with them.

JER. Nay, your position is pretty even with theirs, that's the truth on't.

VAL. I'll take some of their trade out of their hands. . . . I'll write a play.

JER. Hem! Sir, if you please to give me a small certificate of three lines; only to certify those whom it may concern that the bearer thereof, Jeremy Fetch by name, has for the space of seven years truly and faithfully served Valentine Legend, Esq.; and that he is not now turned away from any misdemeanour, but does voluntarily dismiss his master from any future authority over him.

VAL. No, sirrah, you shall live with me still.

JER. Sir, it's impossible. I may die with you, starve with you, or be damned with your works; but to live, even three days, the life of a play, I no more expect it than to be canonised for a muse after my decease.

Perhaps the most concise summing up of Congreve's literary quality has been made by our greatest living writer of comedy, though not of comedies. Mr. George Meredith, in his "Essay on Comedy and the Uses of the Comic Spirit," says that, "where Congreve excels all his English rivals is in his literary force and a succinctness of style peculiar to him. . . . He hits the mean of a fine style and a natural one in dialogue. He is at once precise and voluble. If you have ever thought upon style you will acknowledge it to be a signal accomplishment. In this he is a classic, and is worthy of treading a measure with Molière."



ROBERT BLOOMFIELD.

By JOHN H. SWANN.

WHEN critics disagree the best thing we can do is to read the book and enjoy it, if it be to our taste. For the more the critics differ the surer we may be that there is something good in it. So, in seeking the aid of critics for a judgment on Robert Bloomfield and his writings we shall find ourselves somewhat perplexed; for by one he is likened to Theocritus, and by another his chief production is dismissed as "poor thin verse." Even Charles Lamb refers to him as having "a poor mind," though later he writes: "He dined with me once, and his manners took me exceedingly."

The biographical aspect of the history of English literature does not err on the side of cheerfulness. Too often the record is one of ill-health and poverty, and Bloomfield's case is not altogether an exception. It was at Honington, in Suffolk, on December 3rd, 1766, that he was born. His father was a tailor, who died of small-pox before Robert had completed his first year. In a poem in praise of vaccination, entitled "Good Tidings," Bloomfield refers to his father's death, and depicts the scene of his burial with a Rembrandtesque touch:—

Midnight beheld the close of all his pain,
His grave was clos'd when midnight came again;
No bell was heard to toll, no funeral pray'r,
No kindred bow'd, no wife, no children there.
Its horrid nature could inspire a dread
That cut the bonds of custom like a thread.
The humble church-tow'r higher seem'd to show
Illumin'd by their trembling light below.

There were five more children, and the mother opened a small school as a means of support. What he received under his mother's care, with a few months at another school in a neighbouring town, constituted the whole of Bloomfield's scholastic experience; the rest of his education was self-attained. In course of time Mrs. Bloomfield married again, and with the advent of another family Robert, at the age of eleven, had to turn out to work. An uncle by marriage, Mr. Austin, a farmer at Sapiston (a village adjoining Honington) took him into his house, and employed him on the farm, thus providing the material for the future poem "The Farmer's Boy," which remains Bloomfield's chief and best-known production. But when Robert was about fifteen years of age Mr. Austin came to the conclusion that he was not likely to be a success as a farmer, he being small for his age and not strong enough. His brothers George and Nathaniel were in London—the former shoemaking, the latter tailoring—and to them Mrs. Bloomfield appealed. George promised to teach him his trade, and Nathaniel undertook to see to his clothing; so little Robert found himself transported from the fields of Sapiston to a London garret, where George and four other workmen did their shoemaking. He ran errands for them, read the newspaper to them, and presumably helped in the work. A history of England, "The British Traveller," and a geography published in

parts were also read; not, however, with any great relish on the reader's part. More to Robert's taste was "The London Magazine," which his brother took in, the "Poet's Corner" of which evidently roused his ambition, and he tried his hand at verse-making, with ultimate success sufficient to gain him access to that minor Parnassus. A Scotchman, possessed of Thomson's "Seasons," Milton's "Paradise Lost," and some novels, lent them to Bloomfield. He was particularly pleased with "The Seasons." "I never heard him give so much praise to any book as that," said his brother George. Here was a further step towards "The Farmer's Boy."

A dispute arose as to the employment as journeymen-shoemakers of those who had not served an apprenticeship, and as Robert had not so served, his brother was involved. Robert returned home for a time, and Mr. Austin kindly invited him to Sapiston, where he remained for two months, seeing afresh and through the medium of his newly-awakened poetic feeling the well-known scenes, and reviving his knowledge of farming ways. At the end of this time, a way out of the trade difficulty having been found, Bloomfield returned to London and the making of shoes. In 1790, when in his twenty-fifth year, he married Mary Anne Church, a Woolwich girl. Being too poor to have a house to themselves, the pair went into furnished lodgings, but in time hired a room at 14, Bell Alley, Coleman Street, where, working in the garret with six others busy about him, Bloomfield gradually composed "The Farmer's Boy." He relied on a good memory to enable him to compose and work at the same time. Thus he says: "'Winter' and half of 'Autumn' were done long before I could find leisure to write them." It was April, 1798, ere the poem was finished, and towards the end the idea of getting it into print in book form came into his

mind. Previously he seems to have chiefly intended it as a present for his mother, that she might have pleasure in reading of places and characters well known to her. So before sending the MS. to his brother George (then removed to Bury St. Edmunds) for conveyance to his mother, he tried various publishers, but without success.

George was more fortunate; with his brother's consent, he submitted the MS. to Mr. Capel Lofft, who lived at Troston, near Bury St. Edmunds, and who had a reputation for befriending poetic aspirants. Byron refers to him¹ as "Capel Lofft, Esq., the Mæcenas of shoemakers and preface-writer-general to distressed verse-men." However, it says something for Mr. Lofft's sympathy and discernment that the application was not made in vain. He sent Robert an encouraging letter, and the manuscript went to the printer. In 1800 "The Farmer's Boy" appeared as a well-printed quarto, with illustrations after the manner of Bewick. Through his patron Bloomfield was introduced to various eminent personages, including the Duke of Grafton, at whose house in Piccadilly the poet first saw his poem in book-form. He acknowledges that he had left the production practically entirely in Mr. Lofft's hands. The tide of public appreciation is said to have carried the poem through seven editions (26,000 copies) in three years, a striking fact when one considers that this was no work of exciting narrative, but a quiet description of the usually peaceful incidents of farm life.

Bloomfield's financial position was materially improved by this success, but his too lavish generosity to relatives and friends soon reduced his purse. The fame of the poem found its way to other lands, and it was translated into French and Italian, while on enthusiastic admirer even turned a portion into Latin.

1. Note to *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*.

By the influence of His Grace of Grafton, Bloomfield left the shoemaker's bench for a post as undersealer of writs in the Seal Office, but ill-health and, it is said, a repugnance to stamping documents which were to send poor persons to prison, caused him ultimately to relinquish the work. He turned to the making of Æolian harps, and the Duke granted him an allowance of one shilling a day. Next we hear of a venture into bookselling, with disastrous results, the poet becoming bankrupt. In 1812 he went to live at Shefford, in Bedfordshire, but was back again in London in the following year. By this time he had published various other volumes of verse; in 1802 "*Rural Tales, Ballads and Songs*" (which ran into a number of editions); in 1804 "*Good Tidings, or News from the Farm*"; in 1806, "*Wild Flowers*"; in 1811 "*The Banks of the Wye*," a kind of versified journal of an excursion down the Wye and through part of South Wales, undertaken for the benefit of his health in the company and with the assistance of various good friends.

His remaining publications were, in 1817, "*The History of Little Davy's New Hat*" (prose); in 1822, "*May Day with the Muses*," and in 1823, "*Hazlewood Hall: a Village Drama*."

Half blind and depressed in spirits, Bloomfield again left London for Shefford, and there in poverty he died on August 19th, 1823, in his 57th year, leaving a widow and four children.¹ He was buried in Campton Churchyard, and his admirers set up a stone to mark his grave. At his death he was in debt; it is pleasant to know that after the publication of his "*Remains*" in 1824 his wife and family nobly cleared his memory of that reproach.

"Sadly wanting in independence and manliness," so we

1. Two daughters were living in 1867 in Hoxton Square, London (S. T. Hall, "*Biographical Sketches*,").

read in the article on Bloomfield in the *Dictionary of National Biography*. Whether a reading of the poet's manuscripts and letters, which repose unprinted (save for a small selection published in 1870) in the British Museum, would alter our opinion in the direction of such a verdict we cannot say, but our reading of the printed materials suggests an unassuming, quietly-disposed man, who certainly did not lose his head when fame came. He was counselled to remember Burns. "I do remember Burns," said he,¹ "but I am not Burns, neither have I his fire to fan nor to quench, nor his passions to control. Where, then, is my merit if I make a peaceful voyage on a calm sea, and no mutiny on board." And, further, he could write in "The Farmer's Boy" these two lines:—

Then no disgrace my humble verse shall feel,
Where not one lying line to riches bows.

We get a further personal glimpse and testimony from his brother George, who wrote:—"He is of a slender make; of about five feet four inches high; very dark complexion. His mother . . . took all the pains she could in his infancy to make him pious; and, as his reason expanded, his love of God and man increased with it. I never knew his fellow for mildness of temper and goodness of disposition . . . he [is] praised by those who know him best, for the best of husbands, an indulgent father, and quiet neighbour."

The limits of a short paper will not permit any examination of his writings beyond "The Farmer's Boy." They are chiefly the "short and simple annals of the poor," and without being specially noteworthy they are generally pleasing, giving us insight into the unsophisticated life

1. Letter to the Earl of Buchan.

of village and countryside, with the old festivals and customs now so fast disappearing. One might say that Bloomfield's poems (apart from the question of merit) bear a similar relationship to present-day literature as Morland's or Constable's pictures do to those in a modern Academy exhibition. In these verses the heights and depths of passion are not found; the adventurous quests of the spirit must be sought elsewhere. But those who "study to be quiet," and like a simple tale simply told will find something here to their liking.

Coming then, to his best-known work, and being aware of Bloomfield's acknowledged admiration for Thomson's "Seasons," we might be excused for anticipating a mere echo of the more renowned work. But we shall be agreeably disappointed. Necessarily there is some similarity in the two poems; the four seasons and their phenomena were the same for Bloomfield as for Thomson, but while the latter ranges over a wide scene, foreign as well as British, the former is concerned only with his native Suffolk soil and with farm life and incident in particular. Thomson has more literary art, and his book-knowledge and classic lore are prominent amid his nature pictures. Bloomfield gives us nature seen direct; not through a study window, but with the fresh breeze singing in our ears and the rich earth clinging to our boots. It is the only genuine realism. Moreover, the poet, not having had the advantages of a university education, we are spared the incongruity of classic deities amid Suffolk farm-lands, "those cursed Dryad and Pagan trumperies of modern verse," as Lamb expressed it.

The verse, the well-known rhymed couplet or heroic measure, flows smoothly along, with an occasional obstruction in the shape of a doubtful rhyme, and—to those interested in the subject—without monotony. This poetic

calendar of the farmer's year is arranged in the natural divisions of the four seasons. Through each of these we follow the peaceful fortunes of Giles (otherwise Robert Bloomfield), the farmer's boy. Let us join him on a morning in spring as he goes out to perform the first task of the day's labour. He whistles as he strides along:—

His own shrill matin join'd the various notes
Of Nature's music, from a thousand throats:
The blackbird strove with emulation sweet,
And Echo answer'd from her close retreat.

Here is the eighteenth century note, but mark what follows:—

The sporting white-throat, on some twig's end borne
Pour'd hymns to freedom and the rising morn;
Stopt in her song, perchance the starting thrush
Shook a white shower from the black-thorn bush,
Where dew-drops thick as early blossoms hung,
And trembled as the minstrel sweetly sung.

We may watch an evidently contented ploughman (for Mr. Austin, whose farm was the "local habitation" of the poem, was a good master) at his work, and note the added touch of reality in the incident of the birds:—

With smiling brow the ploughman cleaves his way,
Draws his fresh parallels, and, wid'ning still,
Treads slow the heavy dale, or climbs the hill:
Strong on the wing his busy followers play,
Where writhing earth-worms meet th' unwelcome day.

Now we have an impression of the cool interior of the dairy when milking is over and churning has begun:—

Slow rolls the churn, its load of clogging cream
 At once foregoes its quality and name:
 From knotty particles first floating wide,
 Congealing butter's dash'd from side to side;
 Streams of new milk through flowing coolers stray,
 And snow-white curd abounds and wholesome whey.
 Due north th' unglazed windows, cold and clear,
 For warming sunbeams are unwelcome here.

Now we see a flock of sheep being turned into a field from
 a lane:—

Loosed from the winding lane, a joyful throng,
 See, o'er yon pasture, how they pour along!

Perhaps the most audacious individual among the feathered
 —and even the unfeathered—live stock is the gander. Here
 is his portrait:—

He comes, the pest and terror of the yard,
 His full-fledged progeny's imperious guard;
 The gander;—spiteful, insolent and bold,
 At the colt's footlock takes his daring hold;
 There, serpent-like, escapes a dreadful blow;
 And straight attacks a poor defenceless cow:
 Each booby-goose th' unworthy strife enjoys,
 And hails his prowess with redoubled noise.
 Then back he stalks, of self-importance full,
 Seizes the shaggy foretop of the bull,
 Till whirl'd aloft he falls: a timely check
 Enough to dislocate his worthless neck.

The mower at his work is clearly pictured:—

Hark! where the sweeping scythe now rips along.
 Each sturdy mower, emulous and strong,
 Whose writhing form meridian heat defies,
 Bends o'er his work, and every sinew tries.

The skylark has won poetic honours such as kings might envy; Bloomfield makes his contribution, and it is one not unworthy of a good place in the lark's anthology. It is a hot summer day, and Giles lies in the shade "stretch'd on the turf." Suddenly a lark mounts upward, and "calls on Giles to mark his way."

Close to his eyes his hat he instant bends
And forms a friendly telescope that lends
Just aid enough to dull the glaring light,
And place the wand'ring bird before his sight,
That oft beneath a light cloud sweeps along,
Lost for a while, yet pours the varied song:
The eye still follows, and the cloud moves by,
Again he stretches up the clear, blue sky;
His form, his motion, undistinguish'd quite,
Save when he wheels direct from shade to light:
E'en then the songster a mere speck became,

The gazer sees; but yielding to repose
Unwillingly his jaded eyelids close,

—and he enjoys one of the choicest gifts of the gods, an open-air sleep in summer.

There is a stirring hunting scene in "Autumn," but too lengthy to quote here.

To the farmer and to country-dwellers generally, moonlight has an importance not usually considered by the townsman used to artificially-lighted streets. So "The Farmer's Boy" would be decidedly incomplete had not the poet given us at least one description of moonlight in the country. But he has done so, and with a striking beauty and truth. Reading the lines, which are in the section on "Winter," one experiences something of the feeling of calm and peace, the sense of quiet, which accompanies the shining of the moon. Giles is on his way

to the sheep-fold to see that no sheep-worrying dog is about:—

From the fire-side with many a shrug he hies,
Glad if the full-orb'd moon salute his eyes,
And through th' unbroken stillness of the night
Shed on his path her beams of cheering light.
With saunt'ring step he climbs the distant stile,

Whilst all around him wears a placid smile;
There views the white-rob'd clouds in clusters driven,
And all the glorious pageantry of Heaven.
Low, on the utmost bound'ry of the sight,
The rising vapours catch the silver light;
Thence Fancy measures, as they parting fly,
Which first will throw its shadow on the eye,
Passing the source of light; and thence away,
Succeeded quick by brighter still than they.
Far yet above these wafted clouds are seen
(In a remoter sky, still more serene),
Others, detach'd in ranges through the air,
Spotless as snow, and countless as they're fair,
Scatter'd immensely wide from east to west,
The beauteous 'semblance of a *Flock* at rest.
These, to the raptur'd mind, aloud proclaim
Their mighty Shepherd's everlasting name.

Winter comes, and “blasts follow blasts, and groves dismantled roar;” the cattle are under cover, and their foddering is thus described:—

Throughout the yard, housed round on every side,
Deep-plunging cows their rustling feast enjoy,
And snatch sweet mouthfuls from the passing boy
Who moves unseen beneath his trailing load,
Fills the tall racks and leaves a scatter'd road.

Let us take a parting glimpse of the warm fireside in winter:—

Flat on the hearth the glowing embers lie,
And flames reflected dance in every eye.

Sweet then the ploughman's slumbers, hale and young,
When the last topic dies upon his tongue;
Sweet then the bliss his transient dreams inspire,
Till chilblains wake him, or the snapping fire:
He starts, and ever thoughtful of his team,
Along the glitt'ring snow a feeble gleam
Shoots from his lantern, as he yawning goes
To add fresh comforts to their night's repose;
Diffusing fragrance as their food he moves,
And pats the jolly sides of those he loves.

Thus with a simple directness which presents each scene and incident in full harmony with the aspiration, voiced at the beginning of the poem, to "mould to Truth's fair form what memory tells," the history of the farmer's year is narrated so far as it presents itself to Giles with his perhaps uncommon appreciation of the poetic aspect. He seems to take everything into account, even to "the rich manure,"—a "fattening treasure from the nightly fold."

Having read and re-read "The Farmer's Boy," one scarcely wonders that a more rural England than the present welcomed it with no uncertain greeting; not merely because of its author's lowly position, but also because of its cheerful pictures of what was familiar and therefore greatly interesting. So in these days one may recommend it, in old Izaak Walton's words, to "all that are lovers of virtue and dare trust in His providence and be quiet."



THE MAGIC ELIXIR.

A BALLAD.

By THOMAS NEWBIGGING.

THE lady looked buxom and young,
Though the years that she counted were many,—
But the years that she counted, my tongue
Shall disclose not to you nor to any.

For courtly's the custom and sage,
When a lady is well over twenty
It is treason to mention her age—
And of reasons for this there are plenty.

Of the lady I speak, it is said
That the older she grew and the younger
She looked; and her envious maid
For the secret was dying with hunger.

This secret of unfading youth,
Though her friends they grew sallow, and wrinkled,
And fat, and stiff-jointed, uncouth,
Whilst their voices like crack'd basins tinkled.

So the maid kept a vigilant eye
On her mistress, and bored with a gimlet
A hole in the wainscot, whereby
She could spy, though the chamber was dim-lit.

And, peering one night through this chink
At the lady, unwitting, she saw her
Look cautiously round her and drink
From a phial she took from a drawer.

Heavens! here was the secret at length—
The Magic Elixir! Aggressor
Of wrinkles and age, giving beauty and strength
To the frame of the happy possessor!

Next morning our Abigail, fain,
Took a hearty good swig at the bottle,
Which she placed in the drawer again,—
When, as sudden as shot, she forgot all

The immediate affairs of her life—
Began prattling as simple as may be;
Of her mistress's shawl, she fashioned a doll,
Which she dandled again as a baby!

And she chattered and talked to the air,
In a way that was strange and uncanny;
She shortened her dress and let down her back hair,
And behaved, on the whole, like a zany.

She was chid by her friends—not a few—
All in vain! So they ceased to upbraid her,
But, fearing worse ills might ensue,
To the County Asylum conveyed her.

Alas! she'd partaken too deep
Of the brew of the ancient Alchymist,—
Thus, chastisement certain thou'lt reap,
Who straightforward behaviour contemn'st.



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